

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The Land Use element is not intended to be a lot-by-lot plan for future development and preservation of land in Mentor, but rather a guide for development, redevelopment and best management practices.

The Land Use element will evaluate existing conditions, identify emerging patterns, analyze the current zoning scheme, and provide achievable goals and policies to meet the desires of residents and public officials.

4.2 RECENT DEVELOPMENT TRENDS AND HISTORY

A review of existing planning documents and historic photos shows the land use pattern of the City changed dramatically over the past several decades (Map 4.1). Land use throughout Mentor's early history has been dominated by vacant and agricultural land. Residential uses, of which the predominant type has been single family homes, have replaced the majority of the agricultural landscape over the past 50 years. Table 4.1 notes the land use breakdown from 1966 to 2007. Of note, the amount of vacant property has decreased from 63% in 1966 to 14% in 2007. Conversely, the amount of industrial land has increased from 2% to 8% from 1966-2007.

Significant events that shaped the present land use distribution include:

- Construction of the Lakeland Freeway (SR2) and I-90
- Development of the Great Lakes Mall
- Development (and widening) of major corridors including Tyler Blvd. , Mentor Avenue, Heisley Rd., SR 306, SR 614 and SR 84.
- Construction of the Mentor Lagoons
- Opening of the SR 615/I-90 interchange

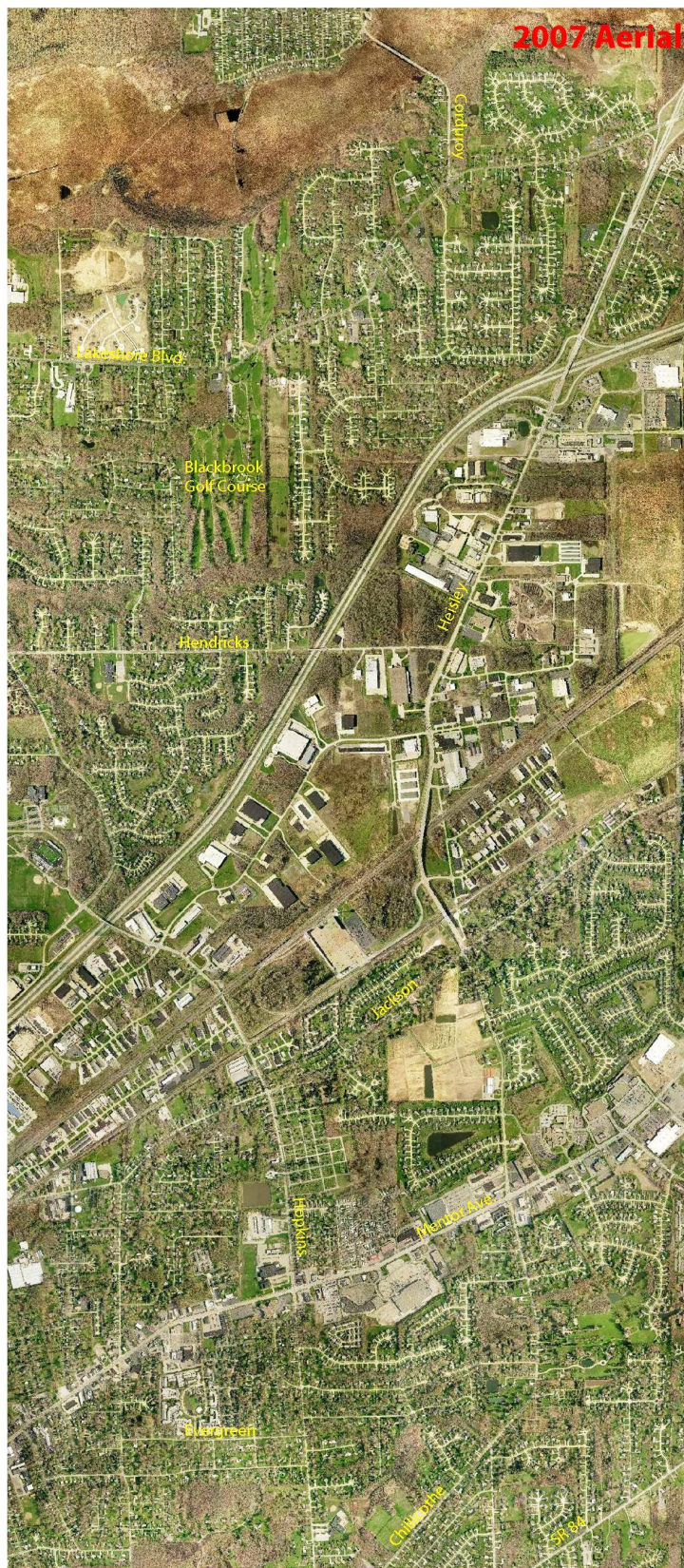
Table 4.1 Land use (acres/percent)

	Year				
	1966	1984	1990 *	2000	2007
Residential	3,243 (18%)	4,200 (23%)	6,158 (34%)	6,490 (35%)	6,790 (37%)
Multi-Family (A.K.A. High Density)	92 (1%)	290 (2%)	332 (2%)	493 (3%)	513 (3%)
Commercial	245 (1%)	800 (4%)	1,160 (7%)	1,045 (6%)	1,132 (6%)
Industrial	298 (2%)	1,100 (6%)	1,179 (7%)	1,266 (7%)	1,431 (8%)
Open Space/Marsh	431 (7%)	2,140 (12%)	2,438 (13%)	1,245 (7%)	1,184 (6%)
Parks & Recreation	-	-	-	1,134 (6%)	1,178 (6%)
Public Building/Institutional	117 (0%)	-	-	742 (4%)	858 (5%)
Public Utility / Railroads	148 (1%)	150 (1%)	150 (1%)	351 (2%)	348 (2%)
Streets**	1,337 (7%)	2,000 (11%)	2,082 (12%)	2,227 (12%)	2,292 (13%)
Vacant	12,339 (63%)	7,570 (41%)	4,386 (24%)	3,257 (18%)	2,524 (14%)
Nursery	757.00	450			
Vacant Commercial		1,709	586	165	151
Vacant Industrial	2,356	1,608	1,400	962	744
Vacant Multi-Family				2	2
Vacant Residential		3,803	2,400	1,228	1,627
Total	18,250	18,250	17,586	18,250	18,250

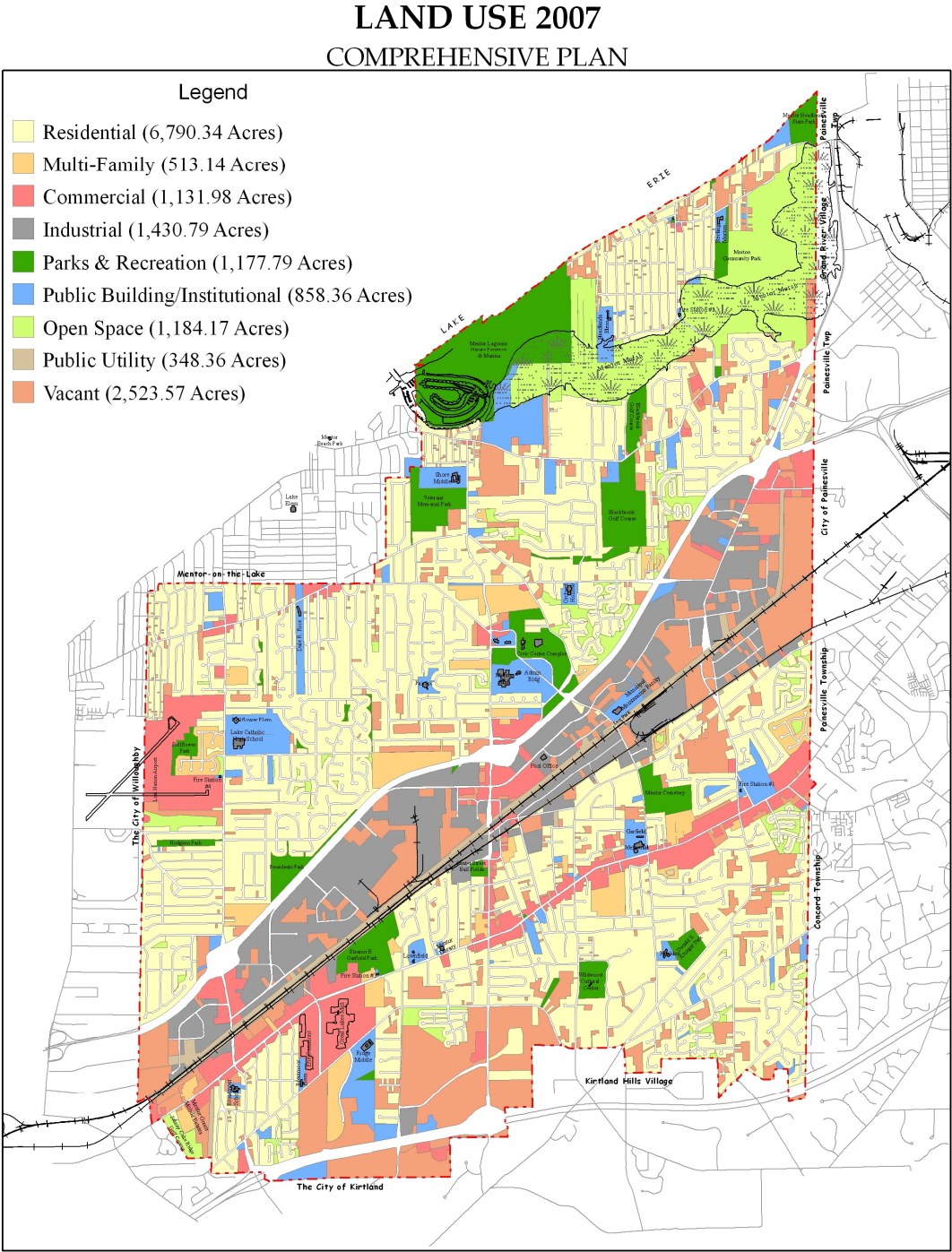
* A different methodology was used in creating the calculation

**Proportion of the 1966 City/State streets estimated by 1984 ration (Source: URS Consultants, City of Mentor.

Map 4.1: Land Use Change, 1937-2007



Map 4.2: 2007 Land Use

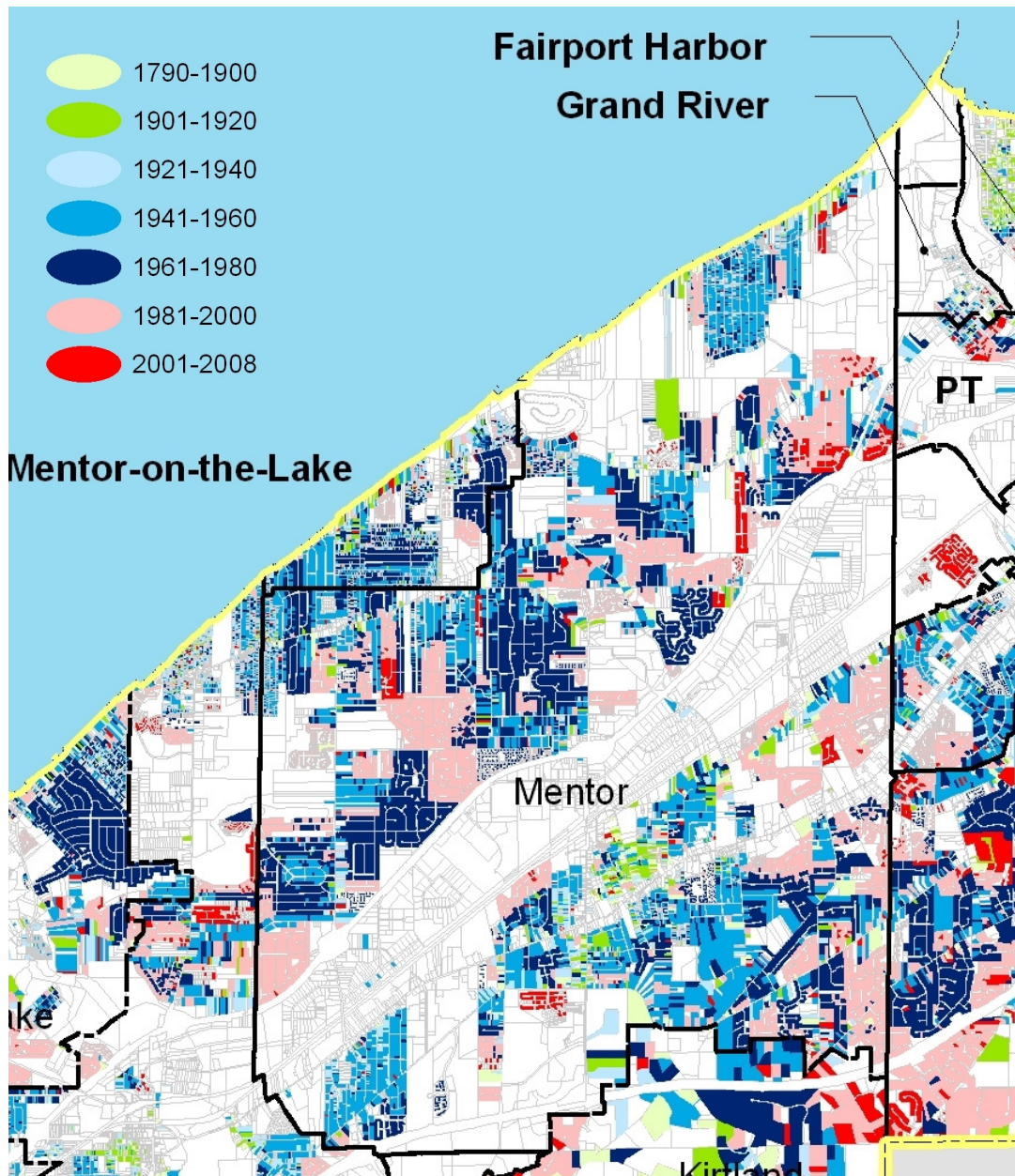


Residential

In 2007, approximately 40% (7,300 acres) of Mentor's land base was residential. The vast majority (37%) is single family dwelling units. The style, density and timing of developments vary greatly.

Similar to other Lake County Communities, Mentor has styles ranging from century homes, early 1900s lakefront cottages, standard conventional suburban-scale developments characterized by curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs, and more recently, mixed used communities such as Newell Creek.

Map 4.3: Year Structure Built



The green shading on Map 4.3 clearly reveals the early settlement pattern of Mentor Village along the north side of Mentor Avenue between Center Street and Hopkins Rd. Approximately 50 of these buildings are more than 100 years old which makes them eligible to be designated as Heritage Homes or structures.

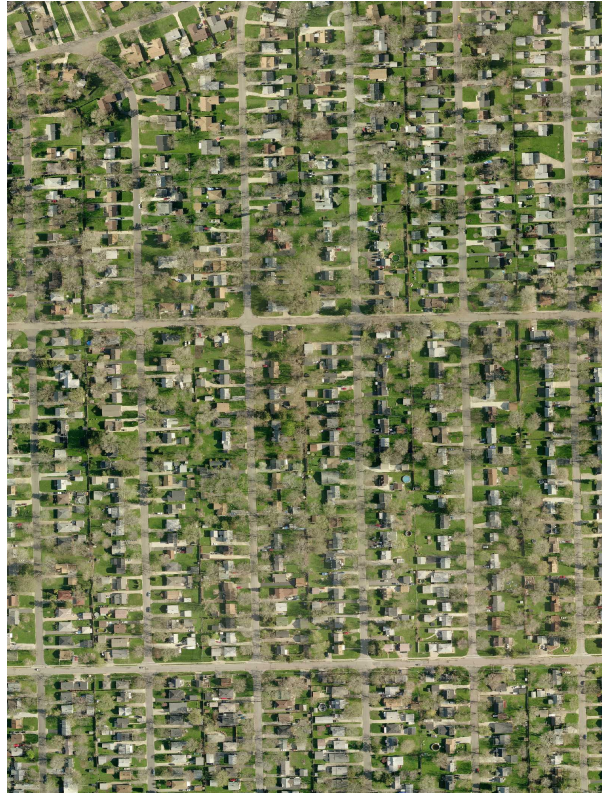
Many of these structures are distinguished by their architectural style. All types of architecture are represented. The majority of which are an amalgamation of the Federal and Greek Revised style.

As with other large cities, Mentor developed in an outward manner from its nucleus. This growth accelerated after WWII and continued until the 1980s. As noticeable in the Mentor Headlands neighborhood, post WW II developments provided affordable ranch (and cape code) single family houses on a rectilinear grid bisected by connector streets, with few cul-de-sacs (Map 4.4).

Federal loan and mortgage programs in the 1950s and 1960s offered preferential treatment to those purchasing suburban homes. The construction of I-90 and the Lakeland Freeway (SR 2) enabled workers to easily commute to jobs in Cleveland, East Cleveland and Euclid.

Beginning in the 1970's through the present day, the street pattern departed from its gridiron past, and rights-of-way in residential developments were platted with a series of loops and cul-de-sacs. Street connections between adjoining subdivisions were limited (Map 4.5). Homebuyers also began to demand larger homes and larger lots. This land was found north of the SR 2 corridor and in the eastern portions of the City (see red shading on Map 4.3).

Map 4.4: Post WW II development pattern



Map 4.5: Current development pattern



Other residential land uses include:

- Multi-family developments- scattered throughout the city but are primarily located along major transportation arteries.
- Mixed use developments
 - Upon completion, Newell Creek will be comprised of residential (single family, multi-family, assisted living), professional office, commercial, retail and recreational land uses within the same area.
 - Center Street Village is a one of a kind mixed use and adaptive reuse development located in the Old Village area of Mentor. The cornerstone of the site is the redevelopment of the old elementary school into condominium units. Commercial and carriage houses are also incorporated into the site.

Commercial

In 2007, approximately 6% (1,132 acres) of Mentor's land was commercial. This represents a 41% increase since 1984. The number and diversity of retail and service businesses serve to meet both neighborhood and regional needs.

As expected, the larger commercial and retail developments are predominately concentrated along the major transportation arterials of Mentor Avenue (U.S. 20), Heisley Road and Center Street (S.R. 615) (Maps 4.7, 4.8). Developed in 1963, Great Lakes Mall is considered the traditional anchor of the retail sector of Mentor's land use. More recent big box retailers have developed along the eastern fringes of the City off Heisley Road, capitalizing on the proximity to SR 2 and the continued population shift to central and eastern Lake County.

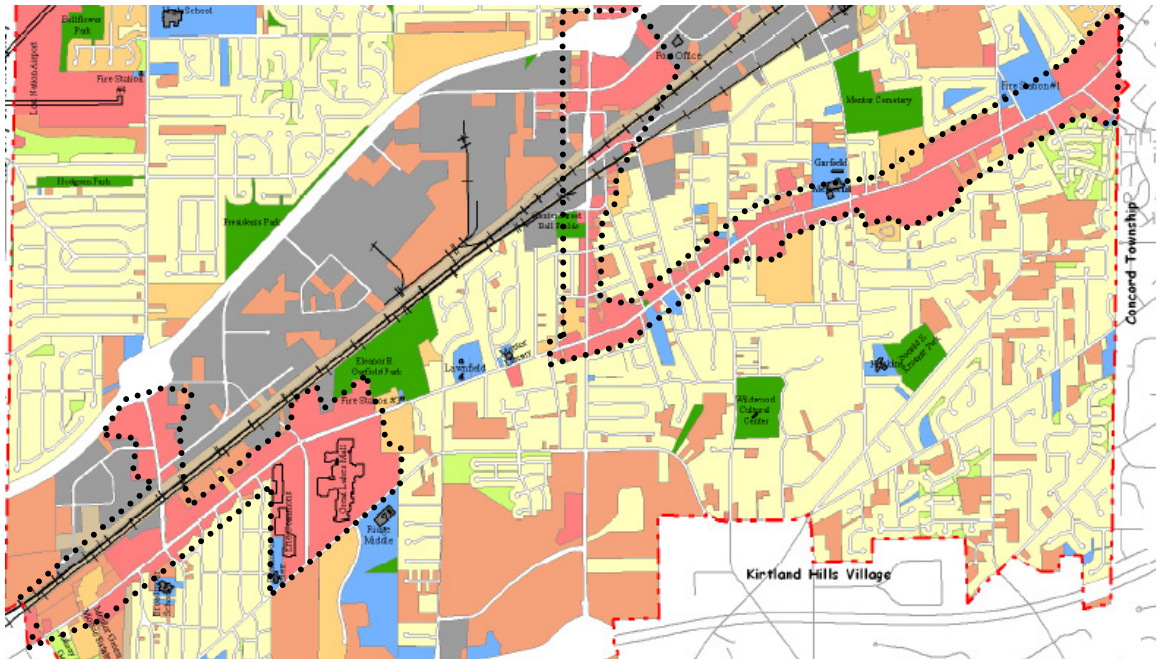
Smaller, neighborhood scale commercial nodes are located at various points along Lakeshore Blvd., providing daily and convenience goods and services (Map 4.6).

Map 4.6: Neighborhood retail (Lakeshore Blvd./306)

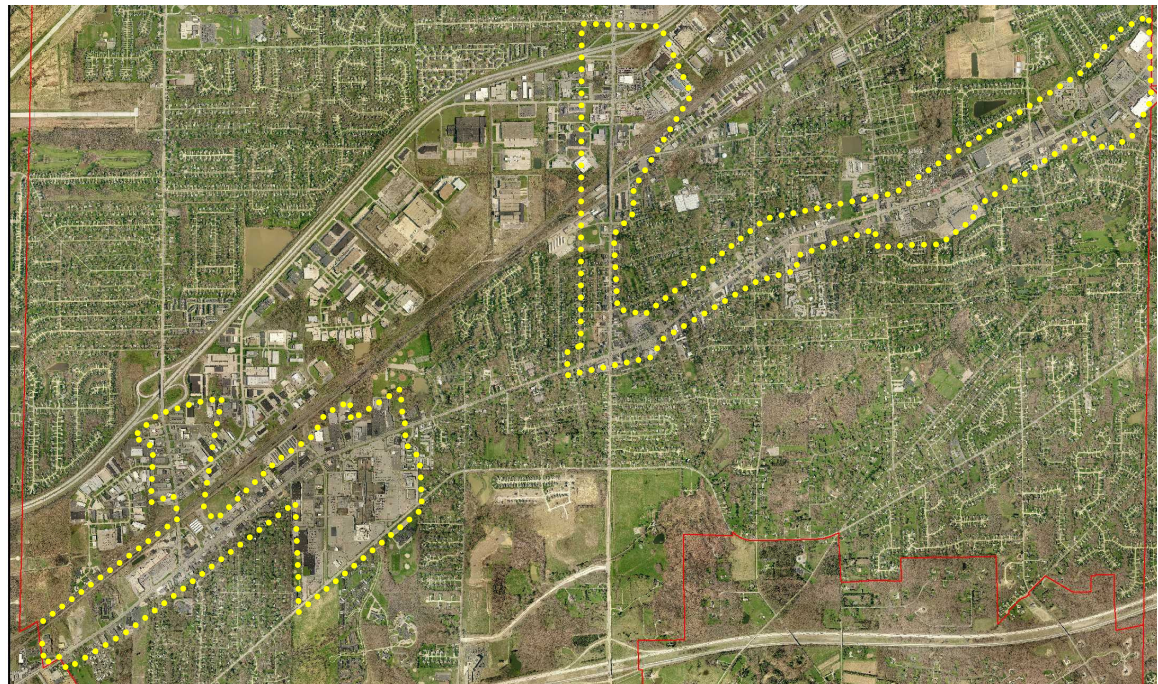


Retail and commercial land use patterns are often the focal point for the community. In Mentor, the majority of the citizens and visitors are more likely to identify with retail land use because of their location on the most heavily traveled roads and the market they serve.

Map 4.7: Commercial land use (black outline)



Map 4.8: Commercial land use aerial (yellow outline)



The NOACA Northeast Ohio Regional Retail Analysis (August 2000), notes the challenges with the retail sector:

- **Visibility** The physical configuration and condition are critical to the city's image.
- **Health** Economic vitality of the city is associated with the ability of its business districts to thrive and remain prosperous and provide leisure time to customers.
- **Social character** Retail areas create a sense of place where residents and visitors can satisfy their consumer needs and encounter other residents. This creates a neighborhood marketplace.

In 2000, there was 28.59 square feet of retail space per resident for supermarkets, drug stores, and other day-to-day convenience goods. The average for Lake County was 18.31 square feet/resident. There were 47.61 square feet/resident for shopping goods and durable consumer products (department stores, clothing, shoes and furniture) compared to 9.44 square/resident for the County.

In Mentor there are ten shopping centers of 50,000 square feet (or more) which represent approximately 2.8 million square feet of retail space of the City's 3.5 million total square feet of retail (see Table 4.2). The vacancy rate in Mentor increased from 3 percent to 6 percent with the largest vacancies being in the Great Lakes Plaza (41,600 square feet) and Great Lakes Mall (37,000 square feet).

There is almost 700,000 square feet of retail space in 27 shopping centers in Mentor which range in size from 11,000 to 45,800 square feet. The vacancy among these convenience centers is 13 percent, a 2 percent increase from the 2008 report. The overall vacancy rate in the City of Mentor's 37 shopping centers is approximately 8 percent, up from 5 percent in 2008.

At the time this plan was written (2008-09), the country was declared to be in an economic recession. Consumer spending is declining which may impact retail markets. It is too early to

What is strip (multi-tenant) commercial development?

The roots of strip commercial development can be found along streetcar lines of the early 20th century. Commercial uses followed busy streetcar lines, awaiting commuters at the start or end of their trip.

Even after streetcar lines were abandoned, commercial development tended to follow streets with heavy vehicle traffic. Communities would often zone all lots adjacent to a busy street for commercial uses. Most strip commercial areas grew incrementally, with lots at their far end rezoned and developed for retail or office use as suburban development extended further from the central city. Because urbanization of Lake County began after World War II, when automobile ownership became widespread, the majority of commercial land use is found in linear strips.

One of longest commercial strips in the Cleveland area is US 20 (Mentor Avenue and Euclid Avenue), where suburban-oriented commercial development extends from Euclid, across the Cuyahoga county line, through Wickliffe, Willoughby, Mentor and Painesville, with smaller strips forming even further to the east. Strip commercial development can also be found on shorter north-south streets in western Lake County.

Strip commercial areas can contribute to traffic congestion, because many access points are required to serve development along the street. Turning movements at access points interrupt the flow of traffic. The street also serves as a destination, carrying more than through traffic. According to the *Northeast Ohio Regional Retail Analysis* from the Cuyahoga County Planning Department, retail development accounts for as much as four times the traffic volume generated by office uses, eight times the volume of light industrial uses, and twenty-four times the volume of residential uses, using an equal area of developed land.

Strip commercial areas can be unattractive, with varying building setbacks, gaudy standardized franchise architecture, large signs, a lack of landscaping, and large parking lots. Many Cleveland suburbs have adopted strict sign, landscaping and architectural design regulations in an effort to improve the aesthetic quality of strip commercial development.

Overbuilding retail development results in new retail space that competes with existing commercial districts for market share. This can lead to lower rents, more marginal businesses, increased vacancies in older retail areas, and reduced property revenues for school districts and communities.

note, but vacancy rates could likely increase in the commercial cores in Mentor and the rest of the nation.

Table 4.2 2009 Retail Analysis

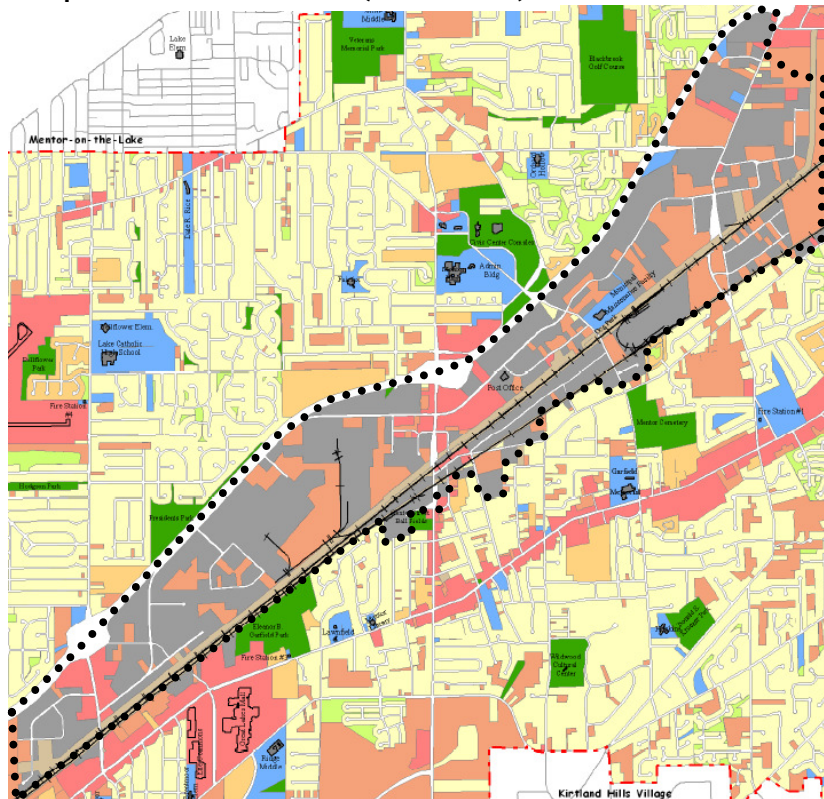
<i>Name</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Sq. Ft.</i>	<i>Vacant sq. ft.</i>	<i>% Vac.</i>	<i>Classification</i>
Ames Plaza	Center St.	1988	136,000	2,500	2%	Major Neighborhood
Colonial Building	Mentor Ave.	1972	78,000	11,000	14%	Major Neighborhood
Points East Plaza	Mentor Ave.	1988	187,000	19,280	10%	Community Center
Levin	Mentor Ave.	1967	162,000	2,400	1%	Community Center
Town Square	Mentor Ave.	1978	76,700	7,600	10%	Community Center
Mentor Commons	Mentor Ave.	1994	290,000	32,490	11%	Community Center
Creekside Commons	Mentor Ave.	1995	190,000	2,667	1%	Community Center
Great Lakes Mall	Mentor Ave.	1963	1,300,000	37,000	3%	Regional Mall
Great Lakes Plaza	Plaza Blvd	1976	160,000	41,599	26%	Community Center
Erie Commons	Plaza Blvd	1973	201,500	19,284	10%	Community Center
TOTAL			2,781,200	175,820	6%	
Cardinal Corners	Center St.	1988	14,000	0	0%	Convenience
Center Station Plaza	Center St.	1986	18,000	1,500	8%	Convenience
Center Street Village	Center St.	2008	19,400	0	0%	Convenience
Headlands Plaza	Corduoy	pre-1963	21,500	2,000	9%	Convenience
Trask Towers	Diamond Center	1998	16,200	0	0%	Convenience
Trask II/Trask Plaza	Diamond Center	2004	23,200	12,391	53%	Convenience
Heavenly Ham Plaza	Heisley	1996	11,664	0	0%	Convenience
Parkview Plaza	Heisley	1994	12,200	1,030	8%	Convenience
Mentor Plaza	Lakeshore	1964	45,800	1,760	4%	Convenience
Eckley's Corners	Lakeshore	1972	23,300	23,300	100%	Convenience
	Lakeshore	1978	12,000	0	0%	Convenience
Midland Center	Mentor Ave.	2007	11,000	1,300	12%	Convenience
Dartmoor Plaza	Mentor Ave.	1977	10,700	2,240	21%	Convenience
Mentor City Center	Mentor Ave.	1976	80,000	4,000	5%	Convenience
Great Lakes II	Mentor Ave.	2001	30,000	0	0%	Convenience
Pier 1 Plaza	Mentor Ave.	1989	15,000	1,500	10%	Convenience
Realty One Plaza	Mentor Ave.	1987	22,500	4,560	20%	Convenience
Mentor Plaza-Drug Mart	Mentor Ave.	1987	37,200	3,107	8%	Convenience
Village Plaza	Mentor Ave.	1998	16,800	1,600	10%	Convenience
Mentor Corners	Mentor Ave.	1987	42,500	2,000	5%	Convenience
Avenue Plaza II	Mentor Ave.	2005	11,100	2,500	23%	Convenience
Avenue Plaza	Mentor Ave.	1988	13,000	1,200	9%	Convenience
Northgate	Mentor Ave.	1991	39,000	4,200	11%	Convenience
Staple Center	Mentor Ave.	1996	40,000	3,986	10%	Convenience
Enterprise Plaza	Mentor Ave.	1992	12,000	0	0%	Convenience
Heisley Pointe	Mentor Ave.	1991	24,000	13,000	54%	Convenience
Johnnycake Square	Mentor Ave.	1988	24,000	3,000	13%	Convenience
	Mentor Ave.	2008	19,208	0	0%	Convenience
Tyler Center	Tyler Blvd	1997	32,000	1,700	5%	Convenience
TOTAL			697,272	91,874	13%	
GRAND TOTAL			3,478,472	267,694	8%	

Source: City of Mentor Economic and Community Development Department, Retail Analysis

Industrial / manufacturing

Table 4.1 indicates approximately 8% (1,431 acres) of Mentor's land is used as manufacturing or industrial types uses. Developments are concentrated in the Tyler Blvd. industrial corridor that weaves through the center of Mentor. The corridor, planned by Eleanor Garfield and Ray Dawson in the 1960s, is bounded by the Lakeland Freeway (S.R. 2) to the north and railroad right of way to the south providing buffers from the residential areas of Mentor (Map 4.9, 4.10). Areas south of the CSX tracks should be evaluated for appropriate zoning and land use in the future.

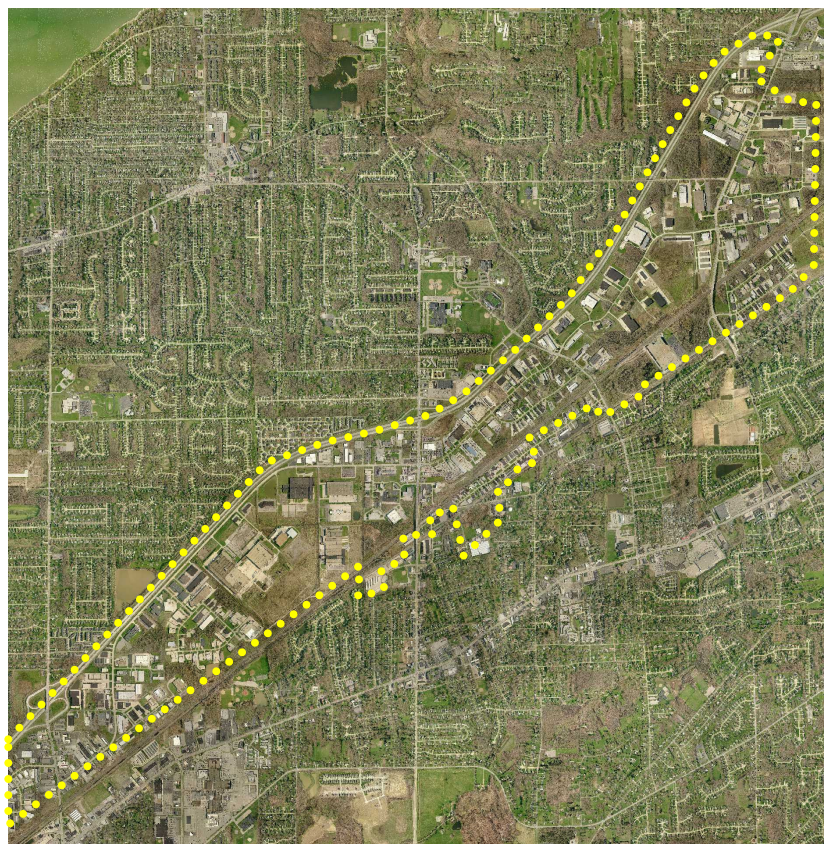
Map 4.9: Industrial land use (black outline)



This industrial sector continues to provide a substantial economic base for the city and employment hub for residents. According to CB Ellis 2008 Market View for Greater Cleveland, Mentor contains 12,565,933 sq. ft of western Lake County's 27,009,075 sq. ft. of industrial space. This is nearly 50% of the available space.

In 2008, approximately 1,460,165 sq. ft. (13%) of the industrial space in Mentor was available. The largest available space is 490,000 square feet in the former Caterpillar building, 416,000 square feet in the former George Worthington building, 180,000 square

Map 4.10: Industrial land use aerial (yellow outline)



feet in the former CE Tyler building. These industrial facilities account for approximately 3/4 of the total available space in the City. A survey of the City of Mentor indicates approximately 2.1 million square feet of vacant industrial space; virtually unchanged from 2008.

The proximity to SR 2, rail spurs, infrastructure (including high speed cable service in the future) and available workforce will continue to make this area attractive for industrial type uses. The City should not consider rezoning these areas from non-industrial type uses unless other areas in the City present themselves. Furthermore, the 2010 extension of Plaza Blvd. to Tyler will improve access to the industrial corridor.

Tax base

Tax value-per-person ratios are indicators of the relative values of the tax base in a community. The tax value indicates the community's ability to pay for community services and facilities. The following chart shows the tax value per person in Lake County's communities.

Mentor has a tax value of \$32,613, 11th out of Lake County's twenty-three communities. The high tax value per person in North Perry Village can be attributed to the presence of the Perry Nuclear Power Plant. With large residential estates, Waite Hill and Kirtland Hills have corresponding high tax values (Table 4.2).

Non-profit organizations – colleges, schools, churches, and 501 (c)(3) organizations -- are an asset to their host communities. However, their lack of property tax revenue can be a burden when such organizations have a disproportionately large presence in a community. This is not a concern in Mentor.

Communities can conduct property tax yield studies to determine the fiscal benefit of various types of land uses. For instance, residential uses offer fewer fiscal benefits because the uses increase demand for schools and parks. Uses that are a fiscal liability should be offset with uses offering a fiscal benefit, such as commercial and industrial development. A cost of community services study is not recommended at this time due to the amount of vacant land remaining in the city.

Owners of commercial and industrial properties pay more in taxes than it costs to provide public services to the properties. This encourages communities to compete for these properties by providing tax concessions or extra services, which can weaken their fiscal condition. The burden of paying for services to properties subject to tax incentives is often passed on to all other city property owners.

Table 4.2 Tax value per person 2000

	Tax value per person (\$)
North Perry Village	286,964
Waite Hill Village	110,243
Kirtland Hills Village	91,396
Concord Township	44,113
Lakeline Village	41,219
Kirtland	40,868
Grand River Village	38,292
Willoughby Hills	36,769
Leroy Township	33,223
Perry Village	33,009
Mentor	32,613
Willoughby	29,288
Perry Township	28,889
Painesville Township	27,951
Eastlake	27,393
Madison Village	26,061
Wickliffe	25,693
Timberlake Village	25,445
Madison Township	21,940
Fairport Harbor Village	20,807
Willowick	20,228
Mentor-on-the-Lake	18,840
Painesville	15,751

(Lake County Auditor, US Census)

Table 4.3 provides a comparison of the taxed acreage of land per land use per community. As expected, Mentor contains 23% of the taxed industrial land. With the exception of Painesville Township (this figure may be skewed in light of recent rezoning activities in Painesville Twp.), Mentor is clearly the industrial center of the County. Mentor also has a high percentage of Lake County's residential (13%) and commercial (14%) taxed acreage.

Table 4.3 Taxed acreage of Lake County communities 2008; use as percentage of county total

(ex: 33% of agricultural use in Lake County is in Madison Township)

Community	Agriculture/%		Industrial/%		Commercial/%		Residential/%		Exempt/%		Utilities/%		Total
Concord Township	2,199	6.67%	461	5.38%	978	7.13%	7,816	14.00%	2,008	9.60%	0	0.00%	13,462
Eastlake	0	0.00%	269	3.14%	789	5.75%	1,257	2.25%	475	2.27%	0	0.00%	2,790
Fairport Harbor Vlg	0	0.00%	169	1.97%	119	0.87%	77	0.14%	65	0.31%	0	0.00%	430
Grand River Village	0	0.00%	69	0.81%	85	0.62%	20	0.04%	109	0.52%	0	0.00%	283
Kirtland	1,692	5.13%	43	0.50%	642	4.68%	5,349	9.58%	2,658	12.71%	0	0.00%	10,384
Kirtland Hills Village	1,077	3.27%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1,412	2.53%	846	4.05%	0	0.00%	3,335
Lakeline Village	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	37	0.07%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	38
Leroy Township	7,312	22.18%	60	0.70%	274	2.00%	5,743	10.28%	2,312	11.06%	0	0.00%	15,701
Madison Township	10,879	33.00%	72	0.84%	2,233	16.27%	7,401	13.25%	2,721	13.01%	0	0.00%	23,306
Madison Village	1,106	3.35%	175	2.04%	216	1.57%	1,106	1.98%	216	1.03%	0	0.00%	2,819
Mentor	639	1.94%	2,027	23.65%	1,912	13.93%	7,332	13.13%	3,083	14.75%	0	0.00%	14,993
Mentor-on-the-Lake	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	182	1.33%	293	0.52%	73	0.35%	0	0.00%	548
North Perry Village*	696	2.11%	20	0.23%	1,505	10.97%	651	1.17%	209	1.00%	0	0.00%	3,081
Painesville (city)	6	0.02%	1,168	13.63%	370	2.70%	1,210	2.17%	506	2.42%	17	77.27%	3,277
Painesville Township	815	2.47%	2,189	25.54%	1,349	9.83%	3,203	5.74%	1,183	5.66%	5	22.73%	8,744
Perry Township	4,732	14.35%	775	9.04%	778	5.67%	3,564	6.38%	729	3.49%	0	0.00%	10,578
Perry Village	583	1.77%	1	0.01%	40	0.29%	503	0.90%	249	1.19%	0	0.00%	1,376
Timberlake Village	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	118	0.21%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	119
Waite Hill Village	605	1.84%	0	0.00%	43	0.31%	1,603	2.87%	404	1.93%	0	0.00%	2,655
Wickliffe	0	0.00%	271	3.16%	372	2.71%	526	0.94%	465	2.22%	0	0.00%	1,634
Willoughby	62	0.19%	768	8.96%	1,236	9.01%	1,514	2.71%	1,237	5.92%	0	0.00%	4,817
Willoughby Hills	567	1.72%	26	0.30%	446	3.25%	4,809	8.61%	1,294	6.19%	0	0.00%	7,142
Willowick	0	0.00%	7	0.08%	156	1.14%	297	0.53%	63	0.30%	0	0.00%	523
Lake County total	32,970	100.01%	8,570	99.98%	13,725	100.03%	55,841	100.00%	20,907	99.98%	22	100.00%	132,035

(Lake County Auditor)

* Perry Nuclear Power Plant is considered "commercial"

Recreation and Open Space

The City of Mentor has approximately 2,340 acres of recreation and open space. The majority of this property is located in the northern portion of the City in the Mentor Lagoons Nature Preserve and Marina and the nationally recognized Mentor Marsh State Nature Preserve. Other significant open space exists at Veterans Park and the Mentor Civic Center. Chapter 7 discusses this topic in greater detail.

Land Use Conclusion

Mentor is a residential community with a well-integrated mixture of other land uses, which serve to meet the needs of its residents. Conflicts between land uses have been minimized due to the separation of residential areas from other more intensely developed uses, particularly the Great Lakes Mall area and locating of the city's manufacturing enterprises in the industrial corridor. The amount of vacant land left in the City of Mentor allows for a full

range of residential, recreation and open space, commercial, and industrial development opportunities. Furthermore, development opportunities may exist in older commercial areas of the city, including portions of the Great Lakes Mall (see p. 61-64).

4.3 CURRENT ZONING REGULATIONS

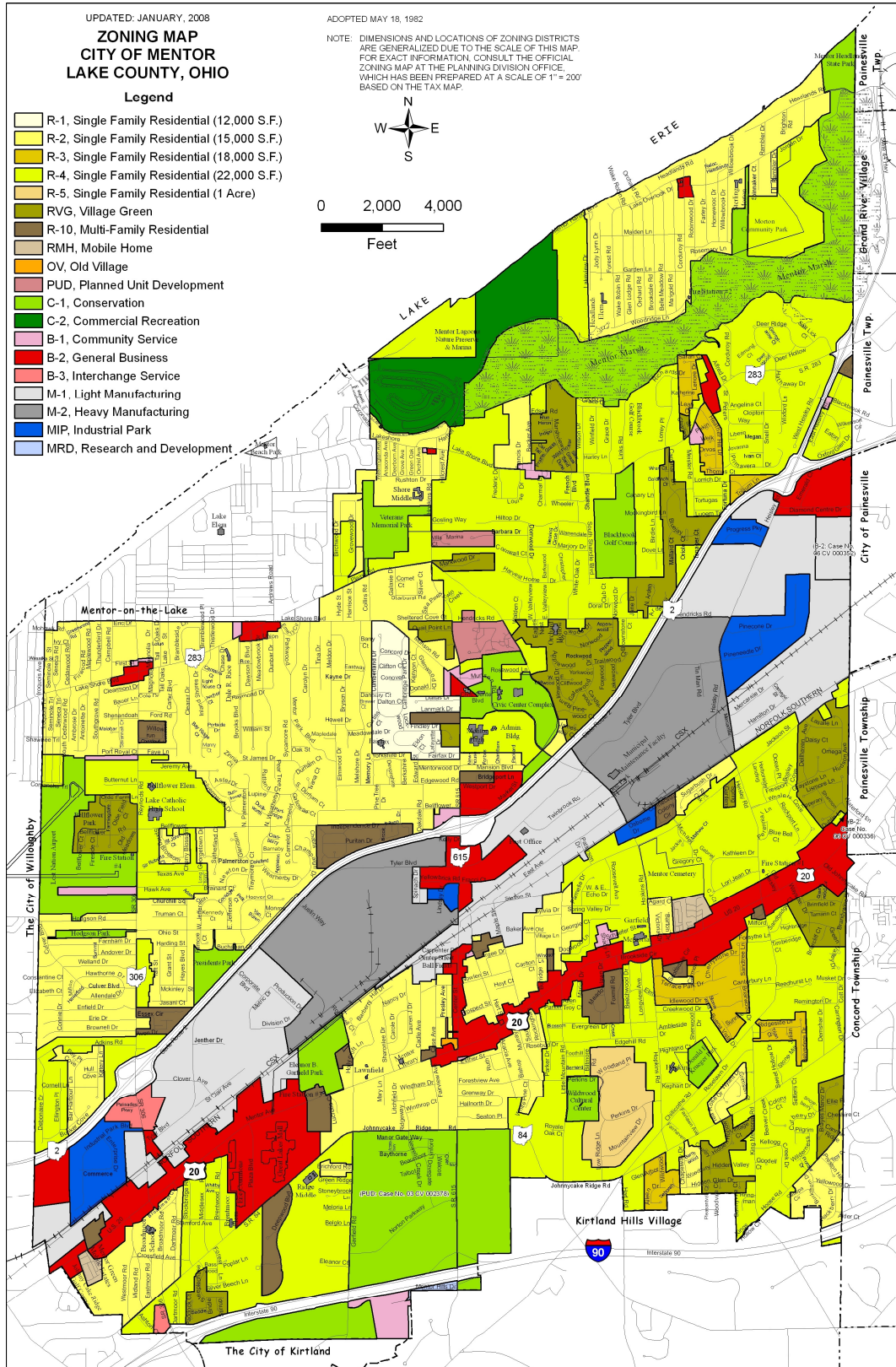
Zoning is the primary form of land planning control for local communities in North America. Zoning codes are comprehensive guides for day-to-day development activity in a community. They expand on the information in the comprehensive plan by providing parcel-specific regulations for the location of different land uses, regulation of those uses, and detailed specifications for the site planning and design of proposed development.

Mentor regulates the use and development of its land through its zoning code and codified development regulations. The original City ordinance was adopted in 1963. Numerous revisions have been made over the years to reflect emerging trends and changes in the market place, which often dictate the development style of an area.

The zoning code contains 20 types of districts (Map 4.11). Each district sets standards for the type and intensity of permitted development within its boundary.

- R-1 Single Family Residential (12,000 sq. ft.)
- R-2 Single Family Residential (15,000 sq. ft.)
- R-3 Single Family Residential (18,000 sq. ft.)
- R-4 Single Family Residential (22,000 sq. ft.)
- R-5 Single Family Residential (1 acre)
- RVG Village Green
- R-10 Multi-Family Residential
- RMH Mobile Home
- OV Old Village
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- C-1 Conservation
- C-2 Commercial Recreation
- B-1 Community Service
- B-2 General Business
- B-3 Interchange Service
- M-1 Light Manufacturing
- M-2 Heavy Manufacturing
- MIP Industrial Park
- MRD Research and Development
- FH Flood Hazard *(not a true zoning classification)*

Map 4.11: Zoning Map



Note: Prepared by the City of Mentor, Department of Economic & Community Development

Residential zones

Mentor has ten zoning districts for residential uses; ten zones that allow single family detached units (including RVG and C-1), three multi-family zones and one mobile home district. Residentially zoned land accounts for 64% (not including the C-1, Conservation area) of the City. Lot size and development standards are the primary difference in the single family zones (Table 4.4). In general, fee simple lot sizes range from 12,000 sq. ft. to 5 acres in the C-1 zone. Lot sizes and setbacks in the RVG and OV zones are established by the approved development plan.

Table 4.4 Single Family residential zoning district bulk requirements

This table represents a summary of standards. Refer to Chapter 1153 of the Codified Ordinances

Attribute	R-1	R-2	R-3	R-4	R-5	C-1	RVG	OV^
Building height (maximum)	35'	35'	35'	35'	35'	35' *	35'	30'***
Front yard (minimum)	50'	50'	50'	60'	75'	100'	**	**
Side yard (minimum)	10'	10'	10'	15'	30'	20'	**	**
Rear yard (minimum)	50'	50'	50'	50'	75'	50'	**	**
Lot area per family (minimum)	12,000 sq. ft.	15,000 sq. ft.	18,000 sq. ft.	22,000 sq. ft.	1 acre	5 acres	**	**
Density (maximum)	3 du/ac.	2.5 du/ac.	2 du/ac.	2 du/ac.	1 du/ac.	.2 du/ac.	2.5 du/ac.	8 du/ac.
Lot frontage (minimum)	75'	80'	90'	100'	150'		**	**

* higher with a conditional use permits

**established by development plan

*** could be higher based on approved development plan

^ The OV is considered a special zone (overlay zone) and shall overlay the regular zoning classification and the regulations and standards associated with such special districts shall apply in addition to the requirements of the regular zoning classification.

In addition to the R-10, the OV and PUD zones could also be considered residential multi-family. The R-10 zone is the traditional high density zone (10 du/ac) most commonly associated with multi-family development. The majority of the R-10 (and RMH) area is appropriately located throughout the Mentor Avenue corridor and other major roadways including public transit, and providing access to shopping and employment.

The OV and PUD districts can be considered mixed use zoning. Along with moderate density residential, various commercial and office uses are permitted within the same development areas. Mixed use zoning is an innovative strategy to create unique and vibrant areas within the City. Regional examples include Legacy Village in Beachwood, Crocker Park in Westlake and First and Main in Hudson.

Locally, while zoned C-1 (Conservation), Newell Creek will yield a diverse land use pattern with residential (all types), office and commercial uses within the same development. These planning principles are encouraged in areas adjacent to Great Lakes Mall when redevelopment needs arise (see pp. 30-35).

Commercial/business zones

Mentor has three primary commercial zoning classifications which account for 7% of the City's land base.

- B-1 Community Service
- B-2 General Business
- B-3 Interchange Service
- *As noted above, the OV and PUD also permit various commercial uses.*

The development standards for the B-1 and B-2 districts are nearly identical with larger setbacks and building heights in the B-2 (Table 4.5).

As noted in the land use discussion, Mentor Avenue contains the vast majority of the commercially zoned land, notably B-2, General Business (Map 4.2). This zone permits uses that generate not only local customer markets, but act as a regional magnet as well (Table 4.6). The B-1, Community Service zone is slightly more restrictive and is intended as a commercial area that is more compatible with adjacent residential areas.

Table 4.5 Business zoning district bulk requirements
This table represents a summary of standards. Refer to Chapter 1153 of the Codified Ordinances

Attribute	B-1	B-2	B-3
Building height (maximum)	35'	35' **	50'
Minimum lot area	None	None	None
Lot frontage (minimum)	None	None	None
Maximum building coverage			
Front yard setback	30'	30'	100'
Rear yard setback	*	*	***
Side yard setback	*	*	***

* Rear and side setbacks established by site plan. When adjacent to residential, setbacks shall be in accordance with Se. 1161.02.

** Higher with a conditional use permit

*** Adjacent to residential, setbacks shall be a minimum of 20'.

The B-3, Interchange Service, zone provides locations for activities most associated with highway interchange access (Table 4.6).

Tremendous opportunity for infill development exists in the B-2 zoning surrounding the Great Lakes Mall present. According to the “21st Century Land Development Code” (Freilich and White, 2008), the benefits of redevelopment of these sites include:

- Converting underutilized parking areas into a preferably pedestrian and transit friendly streets
- Providing a optional, new uses for landowners holding economically struggling retail sites
- Allow landowners to charge economic rents in lieu of free parking
- Eliminating the urban heat island and stormwater run-off issues created by large surface parking areas.
- Promote density rather than sprawl.

This strategy may also require creative public/private finance packages and tax incentives to encourage large scale redevelopments.

Table 4.6 Commercial zoning district permitted uses*

<i>Uses</i>	<i>B-1</i>	<i>B-2</i>	<i>B-3</i>
Offices	P	P	P
Financial	P	P	P
Hospitals	P	P	P
Libraries	P	P	
Clinics	P	P	P
Museums	P	P	
Nursing homes	P	P	
Art and photographic studies	P	P	
Radio and TV studios	P	P	
Public facilities	P	P	
Churches	P	P	
Traditional retail		P	
Traditional retail limited solely to small stores providing convenience goods or services to a customer base primarily located within the surrounding neighborhood only upon issuance of a conditional use permit	C	C	
Child day care centers	C	C	C
Any retail activities from tents and other similar temporary structures	C	C	C
Independent living development	C	C	
Assisted living facility	P	P	
Restaurants		P	P
Private Clubs		P	
Dry cleaners		P	
Furniture re-upholstering		P	
Auction houses		P	
Funeral home without cemetery		P	
Motels		P	P
Nurseries for flowers, plants, shrubs		P	
Health spas		P	
Theaters		P	
Barber and beauty shops		P	
Non-traditional retail solely as an accessory use to the main use of traditional retail		P	
Vehicles, the sales, service, and leasing of vehicles, including, but not limited to, automobiles, trucks, mobile homes, boats, recreational vehicles, airplanes and motorcycles, except rental truck facilities, but subject to the provisions of Section 1161.05		C	
Bars, cocktail lounges and night clubs		C	
Drive-in or drive-thru facilities		C	C
Service stations		C	P
Pet shops		C	
Commercial recreational facilities		C	
Contractors shops		C	
Pool halls and game rooms		C	
Newspapers, printers and publishers		C	
Car washes		C	
Wholesaling and warehousing		C	
Sexually oriented business		C	
Outside dining and/or drinking		C	C
Independent living development		C	
Other similar uses	C	C	C

* This table represents a summary of the permitted uses.. Refer to Chapter 1153 of the Codified Ordinances

Industrial zones

There are four industrial zoning districts in the City accounting 16% of the land base.

- MIP Industrial Park
- M-1 Light Manufacturing
- M-2 Heavy Manufacturing
- MRD Research & Development

Development standards are the same for the MIP and M-1 zones. Larger frontage and setback requirements exist in the M-2 district and all dimensions in the MRD zone are based on the approved development plan (Table 4.7).

With the exception of a small portion of the MRD on Mentor Hills Dr., all of the industrial zoned property is located in a linear east-west pattern in the central portion of Mentor. The area is bounded to the north by SR 2 and to the south by proximity to the Norfolk-Southern railroad line. This area is ideally suited for such uses with access to major transportation modes and limited land use conflicts with residential areas.

Light industrial land uses generally include facilities that manufacture, process, fabricate, assemble, package, or provide incidental storage and distribution of previously prepared materials, finished products or parts. Research facilities are also included. Light industrial land uses would typically have all finished processing within buildings, require limited exterior storage, generate small amounts of truck traffic, and be reasonably free of hazardous or objectionable externalities. Absent is any type of heavy machinery, primary metal or related industries, refineries, wrecking and salvage yards, hazardous materials, and so on. Also absent are retail and residential uses.

While the MIP, M-1 and M-2 allow similar uses, the M-2 provides development areas for land uses that may exceed existing standard performance standards including noise, heavy traffic and outdoor storage areas (Table 4.8). These more intensive uses would require a conditional use permit with suitable controls established by the City on a case by case basis. It is important to maintain the heavy industrial zoning classification in the most isolated areas for future development business attraction. Often, these can be major employers.

Conversely, the MRD zone is for facilities suited to research and development of *new* products and processes. Manufacturing in this zone should be incidental to the main use of the site. As the manufacturing sector continues the current shift to alternative energy, high tech bio-sciences and other “new” manufacturing segments, the need for additional MRD zones may become a priority. The creation or assessment of future research and development parks is a recommended strategy for the city.

Table 4.7 Industrial zoning district bulk requirements

This table represents a summary of standards. Refer to Chapter 1153 of the Codified Ordinances

Attribute	MIP	M-1	M-2	MRD
Minimum lot area	None	None	None	***
Lot frontage (minimum)	150'	150'	250'	***
Maximum building coverage	n/a	n/a	n/a	***
Front yard setback*	50'	50'	50'	***
Rear yard setback*	10'	10'	20'	***
Side yard setback*	10'	10'	20'	***
Building height (maximum)**	45'	45'	45'	***

* Rear and side setbacks adjacent to residential in accordance with Section 1161.02, Screening and buffering required in industrial and commercial zones

** Accessory structure may be higher with a conditional use permit

*** All bulk requirements established by development plan.

Table 4.8 Industrial zoning district permitted uses*

<i>Uses</i>	<i>MIP</i>	<i>M-1</i>	<i>M-2</i>	<i>MRD</i>
Research, experimental or testing	P	P	P	
Offices	P	P	P	
Warehousing and storage	P	P	P	
Printing and publishing	P			
Photographic processing or blueprinting	P			
Making of cabinets, furniture and upholstery	P			
Bottling and distribution plants	P			
Welding or machine shops	P			
Manufacture or assembly of medical and dental equipment; drafting, optical and musical instruments; clocks, toys; games; electrical or electronic apparatus	P			
Manufacture of rugs, mattresses, millinery, clothing, fabrics, and other textiles; and the finishing of textiles and fibers into fabric goods	P			
Manufacture of pottery and ceramics	P			
Manufacture or assembly of boats, electrical appliances, tools, motors, firearms, dies machinery, hardware and sheet metal products	P			
Manufacture, compounding, processing, or packaging of bakery products, candy, cosmetics, dairy products, drugs and pharmaceuticals, soap, toiletries, and food products, (other than meat)	P			
Assembly plants	P			
Manufacture of paper products	P			
Manufacture of cigars and cigarettes	P			
Manufacture of glass or glass products	P			
Manufacture of cork products	P			
Manufacture of products of precious metals	P			
Metal fabricating and spinning	P			
Manufacture of signs	P			
Manufacture and assembly of watches and jewelry	P			
Manufacture of wood products	P			
Wholesale trade	P	P	P	
Restaurants	C	C		
Manufacture of laser devices	P			
Manufacture, processing and assembly of products of plastic, petroleum base, or other synthetic materials	C			
Traditional retail sales incidental to permitted MIP	C			
Child day care centers	C	C		
Similar uses as determined by the Planning Commission	C			
Outside dining and/or drinking	C	C		
Non-traditional retail	P			
Sales, service and rental of agricultural and construction equipment		P	P	
The shops of tradesmen, such as carpenters, plumbers and upholsterers		P	P	
Terminal facilities for motor freight transportation, not including truck stops		C		
Animal hospitals and kennels		C		
Automobile repair shops		C		
Recreational facilities	C	C		
Traditional retail activities incidental to permitted M-1 uses and further subject to Section 1161.03 (CUP required at present)	C	C		
Rental truck facilities		C		
Child day care centers	C	C		
Hotels and motels		C		
Sexually oriented business with		C		
Crematory		C		
Other similar uses with Cond. Use Permit	C	C	C	
Research and development facilities, with incidental manufacturing and office facilities				P
Industrial uses not permitted by right in the M-1			C	

* This table represents a summary of the permitted uses.. Refer to Chapter 1153 of the Codified Ordinances

4.4 AESTHETICS AND URBAN DESIGN

Site plans

Unlike other Lake County communities, site plans have been a requirement in Mentor since 1969 (Section 1133). They are “intended to insure ample provisions for the efficient use of land and to promote high standards in the layout, design, architecture, landscaping and construction of development.” Site plans are required for all projects reviewed by the Planning Commission.

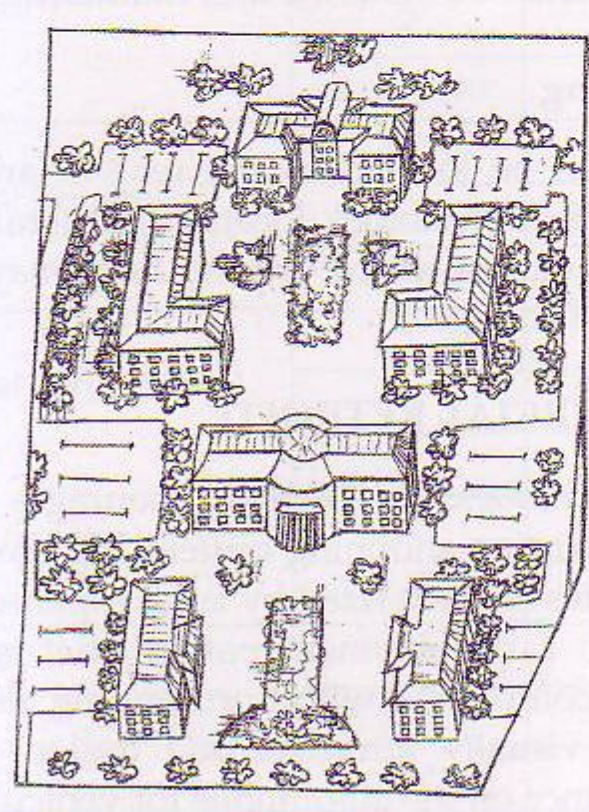
In addition to the existing text, this plan recommends adopting site planning requirements that encourage a hybrid site plan, with parking split between the side and rear of a building, and “retail villages,” where many buildings are oriented towards an internal drive or road network that recreates the feel of a village street (Map 4.12). This plan also recommends standards that will promote a pedestrian-friendly environment inside shopping centers, such as requiring internal plazas and a walkway system connecting buildings and parking areas on the site. Requiring improved pedestrian connections between buildings and parking by use of crosswalks and sidewalks are also recommended.

Past development styles usually have one of two forms. On larger lots, a commercial building will be placed in the far rear end of the lot, separated from the street by a large, parking lot, much of which usually stands empty. On smaller, narrower lots, the primary building is usually close to the right-of-way, usually separated from the street by a small, often unpaved parking area. The rear of the lot remains empty and unused, an inefficient use of land. The resulting development pattern reinforces the linear character of commercial areas in the City.

Design guidelines

Design Standards are an effective tool to help shape the appearance and function of the built environment. Design guidelines should contain appropriate examples and graphics to accurately portray the style and type of commercial development desired by Mentor. The standards should be flexible enough to accommodate both small-scale retail and big box development and all uses in between. Regardless of scope, all projects should consider the following:

Map 4.12: Retail Village layout



- Surrounding neighborhood: developments should contribute and enhance the area by respecting the scale, proportion and architecture of area.
- Improve vehicular / pedestrian circulation between project site and adjacent land uses
- Minimize impact of visual character, noise and light through buffering techniques.
- Use environmentally sensitive development practices (bio-swales, pervious pavement)

In 1994, the City prepared the “Design Guidelines for Commercial and Industrial Corridors.” This useful resource has not been codified. This plan recommends the codification of official guidelines. These should be reviewed during the site plan review process by the Planning Commission as the city’s architectural review board. As noted in the manual, architectural regulations for commercial structures should address, among others, the following:

Building mass

- Prohibit large simple building footprints near less substantial buildings; require variations in the footprint that are not superficial.

Exterior walls

- Materials: brick, stone, or a combination of masonry materials and wood. Metal pre-fabricated structures and block walls should not be permitted.
- Pattern: require repeating, offset, and reveal, pilaster, projecting ribs, fenestration patterns, piers, color change, texture change, and material module change.
- Base: require recognizable wainscot.
- Top: require cornice treatments, overhangs, brackets, stepped parapets.
- Four sided design: walls must include materials and design characteristics consistent with those on the front.
- Projections and recesses: require wall plane projections and recesses for long walls.
- Street facing walls: require breaking up walls with change in plane, texture, windows, or other equivalent elements that divide the wall into human scale proportions.
- Facades: require divided and proportioned using features such as windows, display areas, entrances, arcades, arbors, and awnings along a percentage of the façade.
- Building entrances: require clear definition with an awning, arcade or portico.
- Transparency: require window coverage along a percentage of a wall.
- Garage doors: require segmentation, windows, recession behind a building façade, positioning where they don’t face the street.

Roof

- Require overhangs, minimum slope, regulate maximum continuous plane of roofline.
- Rooftop mechanical equipment: require screening

Building colors

- Require muted colors, limit use of primary or corporate colors.
- Limit color changes to change of plane or reveal line.

Gas station canopies

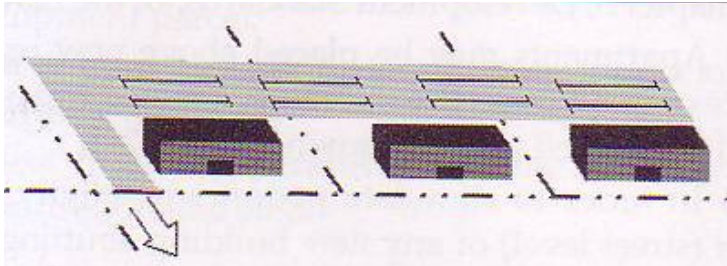
- Require canopies with support pole covers.
- Require recessed lighting, limit number of fixtures and lumens.
- Prohibit corporate branding and colors along the entire fascia.

Parking

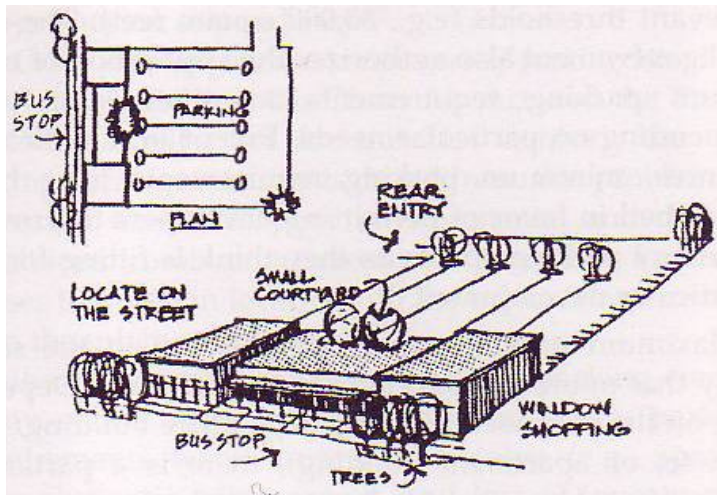
- Encourage parking to the rear of structures or in centralized locations of retail shopping centers.
- Encourage pedestrian accommodations from parking area to structures. Design parking areas so pedestrians travel parallel to moving vehicles.
- Should be designed with a clear hierarchy of traffic circulation.
- Should include proper interior and perimeter landscaping treatment. Proper interior landscaping can assist with traffic circulation pattern as well as storm water requirements.
- Encourage shared parking and access between adjacent businesses.
- Adequate drainage

Industrial and other non-residential uses should be subject to similar, but slightly less rigorous requirements.

Map 4.13: Shared Parking Example



Map 4.14 : Commercial Parking Layout (parking in rear, building oriented close to right-of-way)



Signs

Signs are regulated in Section 1171 of the ordinances. Field verifications of signs within recent commercial developments indicate satisfactory results with the current regulations.

Height and landscaping requirements are two improvements for signage as you view the Mentor Avenue corridor from west to east. The city has an adequate height requirement for free standing signs (8') which reduces the

Figure 4.1: Low Impact Corporate Signage



visual clutter along Mentor Avenue, notably near the western city border. Proper landscaping around the pedestal mount signs create unifying and welcoming feature to the development site. Newer signage is also designed in conformance with the appearance of the structure itself.

Conversely, older commercial signs have higher poles, lack landscaping and aesthetically have no connections to the structure in which it is advertising.

Small businesses give more attention to the size of their sign than the overall quality. Small businesses often make the mistake of trying to convey too much information in a limited space, so their signs become unreadable. The problem is worse for signs identifying multiple tenants.

When everybody shouts, nobody is heard. For signs to be effective, they must not barrage viewers with information that will soon be forgotten, but stand out on their own.

While many businesses instinctively view small signs as less effective than larger signs, the message they convey is distinct and better understood with less competition from other signs competing for the viewer's attention. The presence of smaller signs reduces visual clutter, and thus improves the appearance of a commercial area.

The city should examine a long-term replacement plan for legal non-conforming signs.

Figure 4.2: Pole Mounted Signage



Landscaping

Landscaping requirements are a standard feature in most modern land use regulations. Landscaping on commercial and industrial sites serves the following functions:

- Buffers between incompatible uses or site areas (as noted in Section 1161.02).
- Shade and climate control.
- Air purification and control airborne particulates
- Wildlife habitat.
- Erosion and stormwater runoff control (extremely important along the Mentor Avenue corridor with the amount of impervious surface).
- Control of noxious weeds, invasive plants and exotic plants.
- Encourage native and/or adaptive plants.
- Preserve existing trees and vegetation.
- Provide an attractive appearance in areas of public use or view.

- Compliment natural and recreational areas.
- Screen service areas and structures.
- Reinforce a pedestrian friendly environment.
- Break up building mass and soften architectural materials.
- Enhance the quality and appearance of the built environment.

The City of Mentor revised their landscaping guidelines in 2009 to address the items listed above. Highlights of the new ordinance include:

- Tree clearing permit required for sites in excess of one (1) acre.
- Required screening of all service structures and loading dock facilities.
- Interior parking lot landscaping required for lots with twenty (20) or more spaces.
- Standards for vegetation size and type.
- Maintenance plan, including provisions for irrigation.
- Bonding requirement
- Buffer requirement between residential and non-residential uses.

Parking requirements

Parking volume requirements in Mentor are typically excessive resulting in vast areas of impervious surfaces or small commercial centers with insufficient areas that restrict proper traffic and pedestrian circulation of the site. These should be re-evaluated for change.

With the exception of the traditional holiday season, the majority of Mentors major retail parking areas is underutilized and represents substantial infill development opportunities (Map 4.15).

Similar to most other parking ordinances, Mentor's code has not kept pace with development and design trends of the past few decades. The Chagrin River Watershed Partners and American Planning Association recommend an evaluation of the following parameters:

- Local demand
- Building types and sizes
- Surrounding land uses
- Current and expected populations

Map 4.15: Great Lakes Mall area (excessive parking)



- Potential for additional commercial, industrial and institutional development
- Placement of parking on the side or rear of primary structure
- Are there pedestrian corridors through large parking areas?
- Does your code have effective landscaping/stormwater management provisions?

In future development or redevelopment activities shared parking should be permitted on a case by case basis between adjacent landowners. Shared parking involves an agreement between two or more landowners and the City to approve the required amount of parking across property boundaries. As noted by the CRWP, it is appropriate where parking demand patterns and peaks vary by time of day. Other parking considerations include: land banking, park and ride transit options, and improved parking lot design through pervious pavement, compact car spaces, minimize stall dimensions and requiring bio-retention and landscaping features.

Instituting maximum (and minimum) parking standards is another option for controlling the ineffective use of impervious parking areas. While this may difficult to present to the development/retail industry, it is an option used in other parts of the country.

4.5 LAKE ERIE BALANCED GROWTH PROGRAM

The City of Mentor Comprehensive Plan will be included in the Chagrin River Balanced Growth Plan. This plan is being developed based on a state wide program for balanced growth being promoted by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. In 2004 the Ohio Lake Erie Commission finalized the Balanced Growth Program, defined as a *local planning framework to coordinate decisions about how growth and conservation should be promoted by State and local investments*. Through this program, CRWP has been working with local communities to develop Priority Conservation Areas (PCA) and Priority Development Areas (PDA) throughout their community.

- **Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs)** are locally designated areas targeted for protection and restoration. PCAs may be important as ecological, recreational, heritage, agricultural, or public access areas. PCAs represent areas where land use change is predicted to have a high impact on the watershed in terms of flooding, erosion, and water quality.
- **Priority Development Areas (PDAs)** are locally designated areas where growth and/or redevelopment is to be especially promoted in order to maximize development potential, efficiently utilize infrastructure, revitalize existing cities and towns, and contribute to the restoration of Lake Erie. PDAs represent areas where land use change is predicted to have minimal impact on the watershed and where other conditions, such as access to highways, existing or planned utility service areas, and existing development, suggest that additional development may be appropriate.

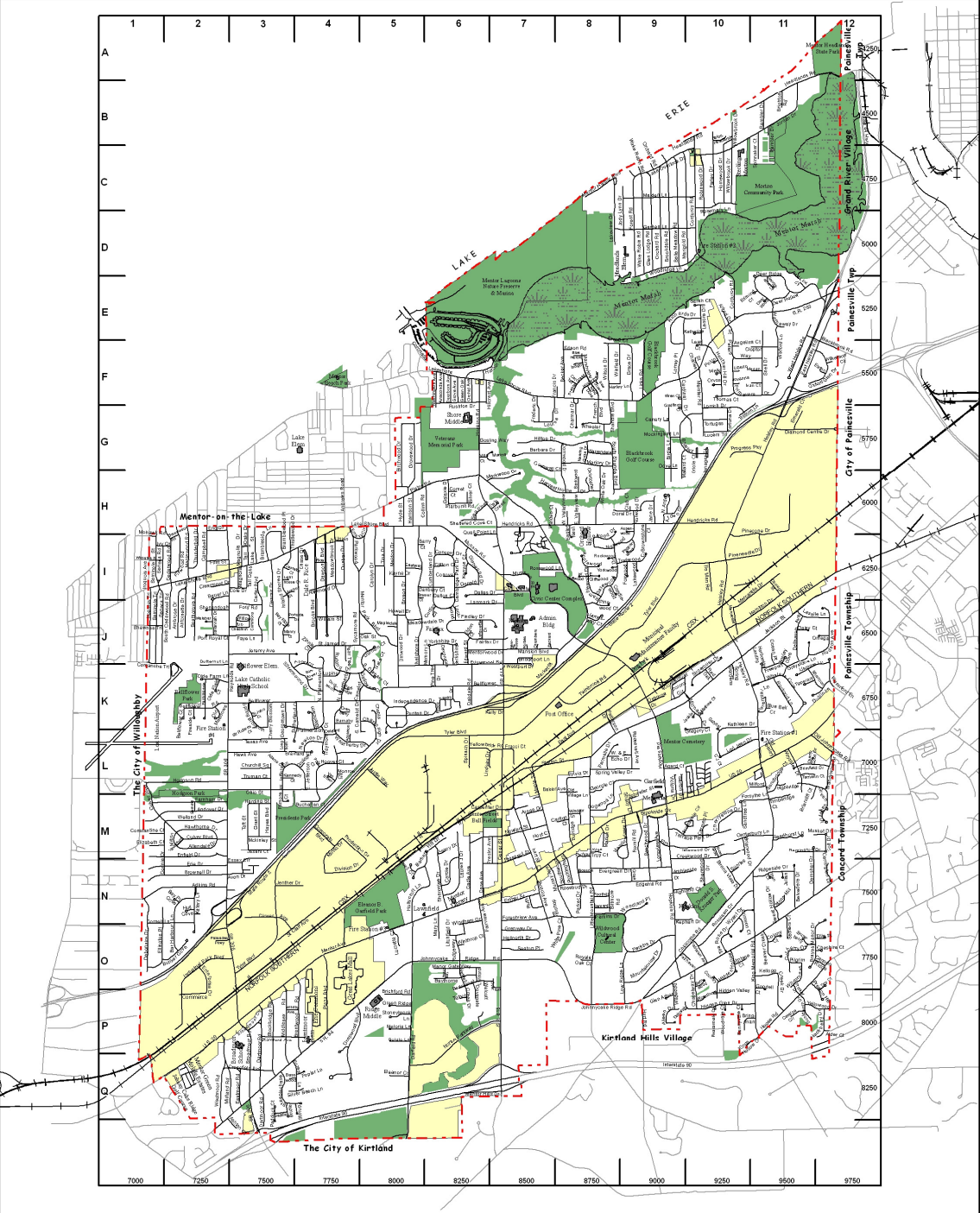
The Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Priority Conservation Areas (PCAs) were recommended by the Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. (CRWP). Maps were modified and refined with input from the Mentor Planning Commission, Administration, and Council to align with the City's planning goals (Map 4.16). These maps have been included in the Chagrin River Balanced Growth Plan. It anticipated this plan will be endorsed in the Fall of 2009.

The PDA locations on the Map 4.16 (yellow shading) reflect areas where future growth and redevelopment activities may be encouraged. Land in a PDA may be eligible for state policy and funding initiatives to encourage and support its development.

The PCA locations shown (green shading) on Map 4.16 reflect areas that are existing parks and protected properties and also include sensitive slopes, streams (Blackbrook, Kellogg, Two Town, Marsh), floodplains, and wetlands. These site characteristics suggest that an area has unique ecologic or historic considerations or may be particularly difficult to develop flooding and erosion concerns. Designation of these areas as PCAs does not indicate that these areas will not be developed, however communities could save time and money working with property owners for preservation or interested developers for alternative site designs that enable development but limit impacts to natural resources on these PCA parcels.

Map 4.16: Priority Conservation Areas (green) and Priority Development Areas (yellow)

BALANCED GROWTH
COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



The PCAs and PDAs designated by the City of Mentor have been included as part of the *Chagrin River Balanced Growth Plan*. This plan will include designation of PCAs and PDAs throughout Mentor and in the Chagrin River watershed.

A key component of the Balanced Growth Program is that, where possible, the state should align policies, programs, and incentives to support the implementation of locally designated Priority Conservation Areas and Priority Development Areas. Communities endorsing the locally designated PDAs and PCAs will be recognized by the State as participating in the *Chagrin River Balanced Growth Plan*. This participation has a number of benefits to local communities. Some of the benefits of participation in the Chagrin River balanced growth planning process include:

- Increased state assistance for local projects.
- Support for local zoning.
- Additional state incentives, such as points on grant applications and lower interest rates on state loan programs.
- General local benefits, including minimizing long-term infrastructure and stormwater management costs and advancing the preservation of the semi-rural character of the city.

This plan encourages the utilization of this tool during the preliminary stages of long-term development discussions in the City.

4.6 PRIORITY PLANNING ISSUES

Old Village Area

The Old Village District (OV) is intended to preserve and redevelop a predefined area commonly referred to as the “Old Village.” This district is further intended to “create a vibrant residential, office and retail district in the heart of the City benefiting property owners, residences, and visitors and all citizens in general, economically, socially, and culturally.” In addition to land uses, architectural and design features are also regulated in this zoning district to protect the historic character of the area.

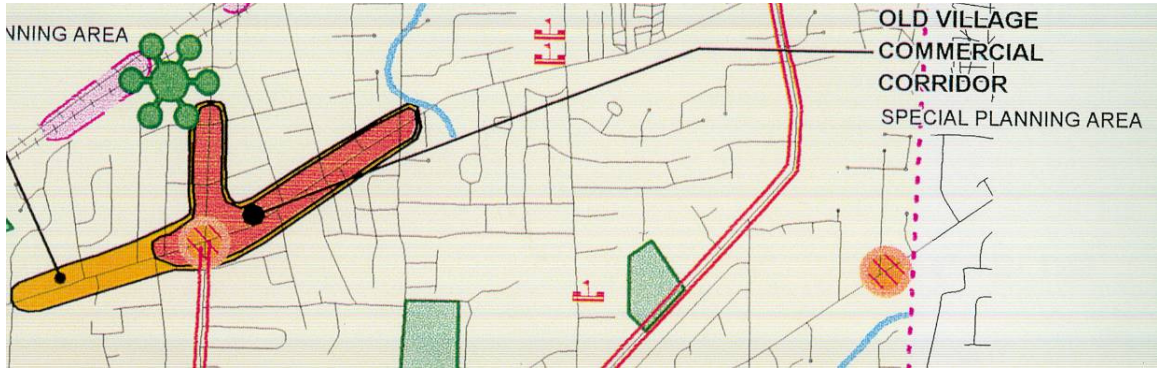
This mixed used zoning can be implemented on parcels within or adjacent to those areas designated within the Comprehensive Plan as “Old Village Commercial Corridor.” The 1997 plan identified this area along Mentor Avenue from Center Street to Jackson Street and north along Center Street to Nowlen Street (Map 4.17).

This plan recommends expanding the applicable area toward the south along the heavily traveled Center Street corridor to help create a gateway as you approach the intersection. Consideration should be given to a westward expansion as well should the land use pattern begin to shift in this predominately residential area (Map 4.18). This expansion would be in conformance with the Community Reinvestment Area (CRA) currently under review. This plan recommends the creation of this CRA as noted on Map 4.18.

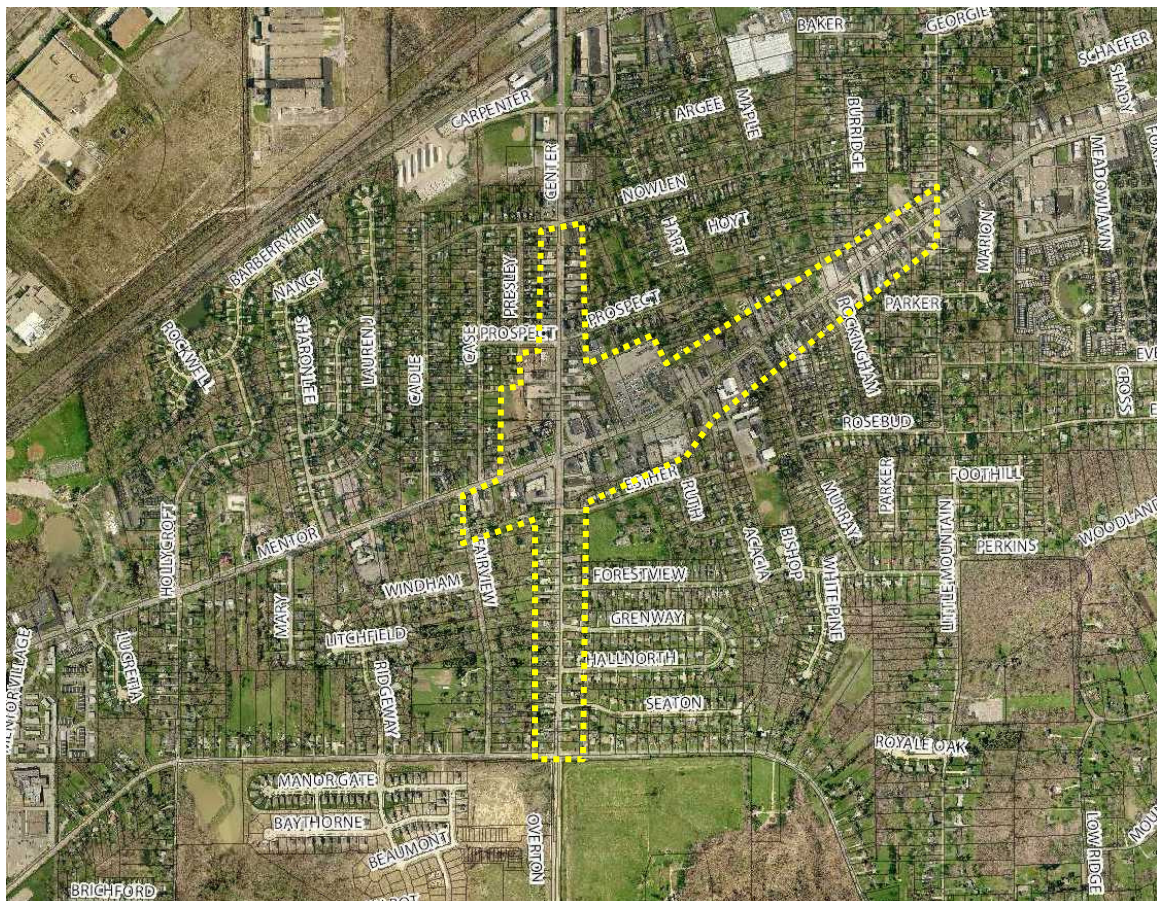
The principles outlined in the OV zone may be suitable for areas surrounding Great Lakes Mall as well. Future commercial uses shall be compatible with the surrounding residential nature

of the area. Shared parking, low-impact signage and lighting and pedestrian accommodations should be required in all OV developments. A historic overlay zone could also be created in this same area to address only structural components of the area and not land use. This would be applicable to residential and commercial structures and could address among others, paint color, window fenestration and signage.

Map 4.17: Old Village Commercial Corridor (1997 Plan)



Map 4.18: Proposed Old Village Commercial Corridor



Redevelopment Great Lakes Mall

Great Lakes Mall and the surrounding area has been the retail heart of Lake County for 40 years. A review of similar facilities in the region and Ohio (age, layout and functionality) indicates that enclosed regional malls generally have fallen out of favor with customers and the development community. The ability of the consumer to buy goods from the internet has also decreased the potential customer base.

In order to maintain a vibrant retail center, this plan recommends a new mixed use zoning strategy, potentially resembling the OV.

A site analysis indicated the following characteristics of the area:

- Zoned B-2, General Business
- Approx. 104 acres (12 parcels, 9 owners)
- Approx. 1,346,459 sq. ft. of gross leasable area
- 6,900 parking spots (excessive)
- 2 curb cuts along Mentor Ave.
- 4 curb cuts along Plaza Blvd.
- 2 curb cuts along Johnnycake Ridge Rd.
- Inconsistent signage among uses
- Minimal, parking lot landscaping and traffic control
- Inconsistent architectural design with a common back dock appearance.
- Minimal pedestrian-friendly accommodations

Understanding the challenges presented with multiple owners, future projects should attempt to enhance the existing feel of the site with the design principles discussed below and indicated on Maps 4.19-22.

Communities, including Mentor, have traditionally separated land uses via three primary zoning schemes: residential, commercial and industrial. This strategy has resulted in 'islands of development types, vast tracts of residential developments separated from commercial and office areas. Referred to as Euclidean zoning, this method has lost some of its applicability with today's land use planning tools, most notably mixed use zoning and town center development.

Mixed-used zoning is often found in urban core areas (Cleveland) and small community downtown areas (Willoughby, Madison Village, Hudson, Chagrin Fall). Over the past decade, suburban communities have successfully adopted modified versions of mixed-used zoning in an attempt to provide similar town center development patterns. Examples can be found in Hudson, Columbus, Westlake, Lyndhurst and Green (near Dayton).

General characteristics of mixed-use zoning include:

- Permissive ordinance that allows residential (typically at a higher density than found in the community), business and recreational uses on a single development plan.
- Elevated design standards to create a unique sense of place.
- Accommodations for pedestrian mobility throughout development.
- Increased building height standards to create buildings with unique character.
- Relaxed setback and parking provisions

- Reduce parking requirements to facilitate the development of underutilized (and valuable) parking areas. Based on available data, approximately 6,900 parking spaces are available. This is about 900 more than is required by some standards.
- Incorporate stormwater best management practices into all new redevelopment activities.
- Encourage and facilitate outlot development thru flexible zoning parameters. Opportunities exist along the Plaza Blvd. and Johnnycake Ridge Rd. frontage. Medium density residential uses would be appropriate on the south end of Plaza Blvd. Retail and restaurant will transition the frontage moving north.
- All new construction, regardless of owner, should follow a consistent city established architectural theme throughout the site.
- On larger sites, incorporate New Urbanist design strategies including increased density, rear parking, minimum front setbacks, pedestrian accommodations, grid like street pattern and centrally located public green spaces that link the development together.
- In phases, require parking area reconfiguration to provide organization and safe, efficient mobility for pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Enhancements with islands can be included into progressive storm water management techniques.
- Examine the feasibility of elevated parking.
- Consider a central greenspace area flanked with smaller scale retail, restaurant and residential uses.
- Enact a more detailed streetscape within the site to reduce the “sea” of pavement feel of the area. Resource agencies such as the Ohio State University Extension can provide a detailed program of sustainable vegetation to achieve the intent of development program. This program and design can be implemented along the Plaza Blvd. right-of-way.
- Incorporate landscaping and storm water management requirements through the use of bio-retention and vegetated swales.

Diamond Center

Future development of the Diamond Center shopping area should continue to focus on new retail that does not currently exist in the City, hotels and entertainment type uses. Light industrial uses should be encouraged along Tyler Blvd. and portions of Heisley Rd., but not in the interior of the site.

Moving existing businesses provides minimal gain for the city, especially if the former location experiences significant vacancy. Long range-planning should evaluate a secondary ingress / egress point to the area for improved traffic circulation and safety.

Lost Nation Airport

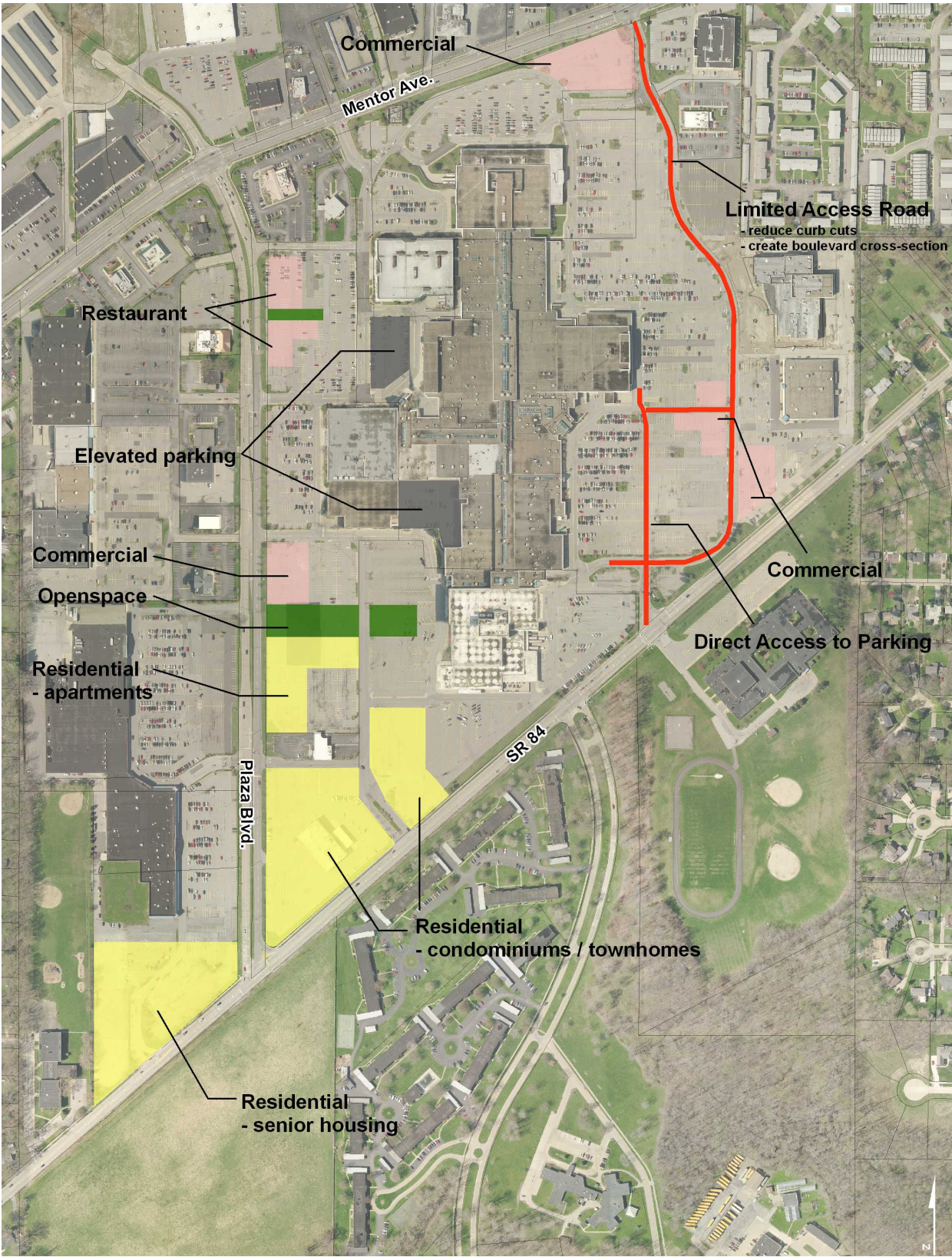
Significant portions of Lost Nation airport are within the City of Mentor. At the time this plan was completed a feasibility analysis of the airport was beginning to determine the long-term viability of the operation. The area within Mentor is currently zoned C-1, Conservation. City officials should pursue a specialized study of this area for the highest and best use of the property should it cease to exist as an airport in the future. Based on the surrounding land use pattern, residential and open space uses may be appropriate for the site. Limited industrial may be feasible in a predefined area.

This plan also recommends examining future land use options with the City of Willoughby as the parcels abut one another and decisions by both communities may have significant land use impacts with each other.

Northeast Corner of I-90 / SR 615

While no development plans exist for the area, the City should consider this a special planning area due to its large size and proximity to I-90. The current zoning is C-1, Conservation and future development would be single family residential on five acre lots. Upon buildout of Newell Creek, the land use composition and traffic pattern of this area will change. This may potentially affect the useful and initial intent of the C-1 zoning along an area adjacent to a highway interchange.

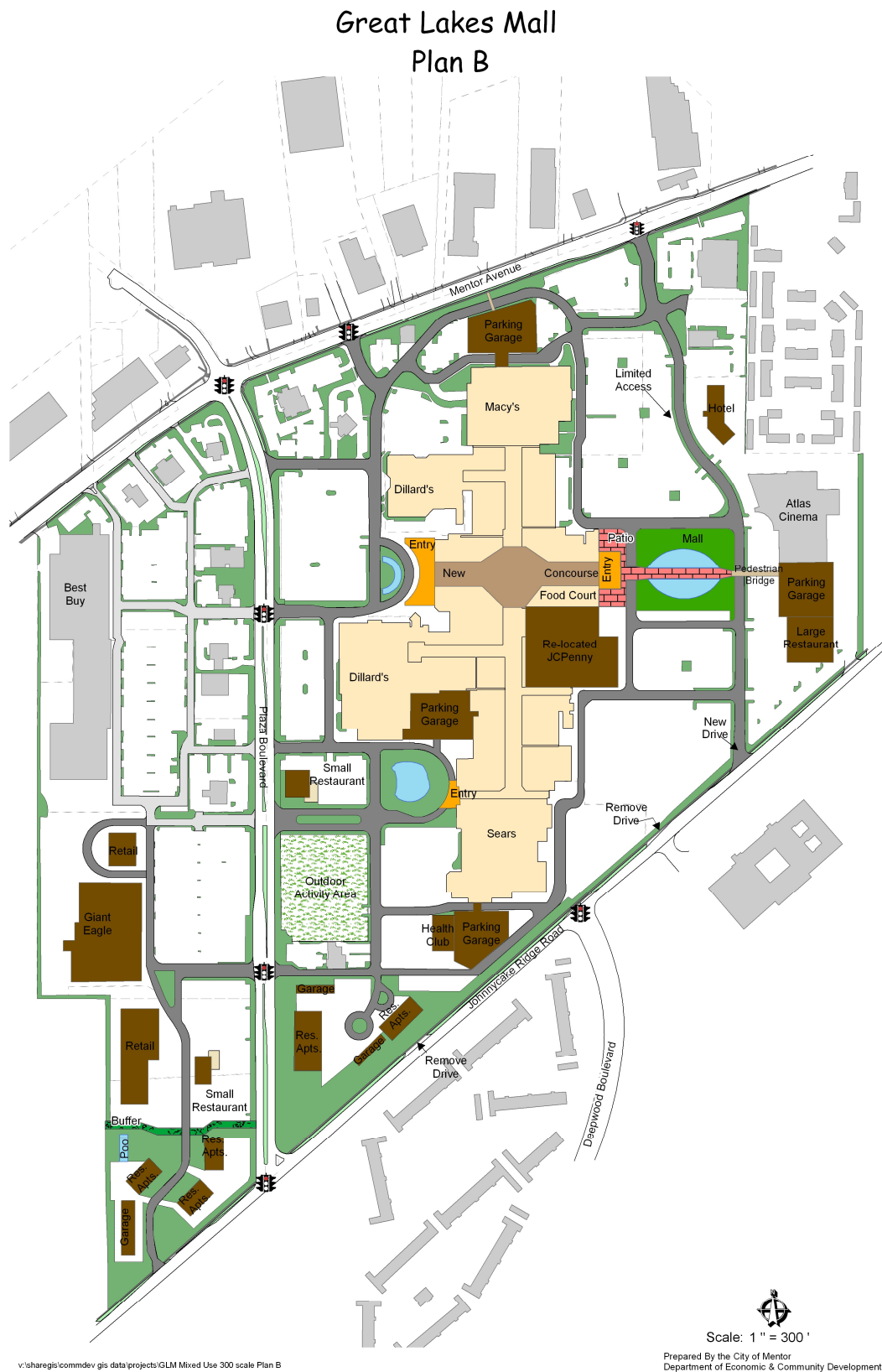
Map 4.19: Great Lakes Mall conceptual land use



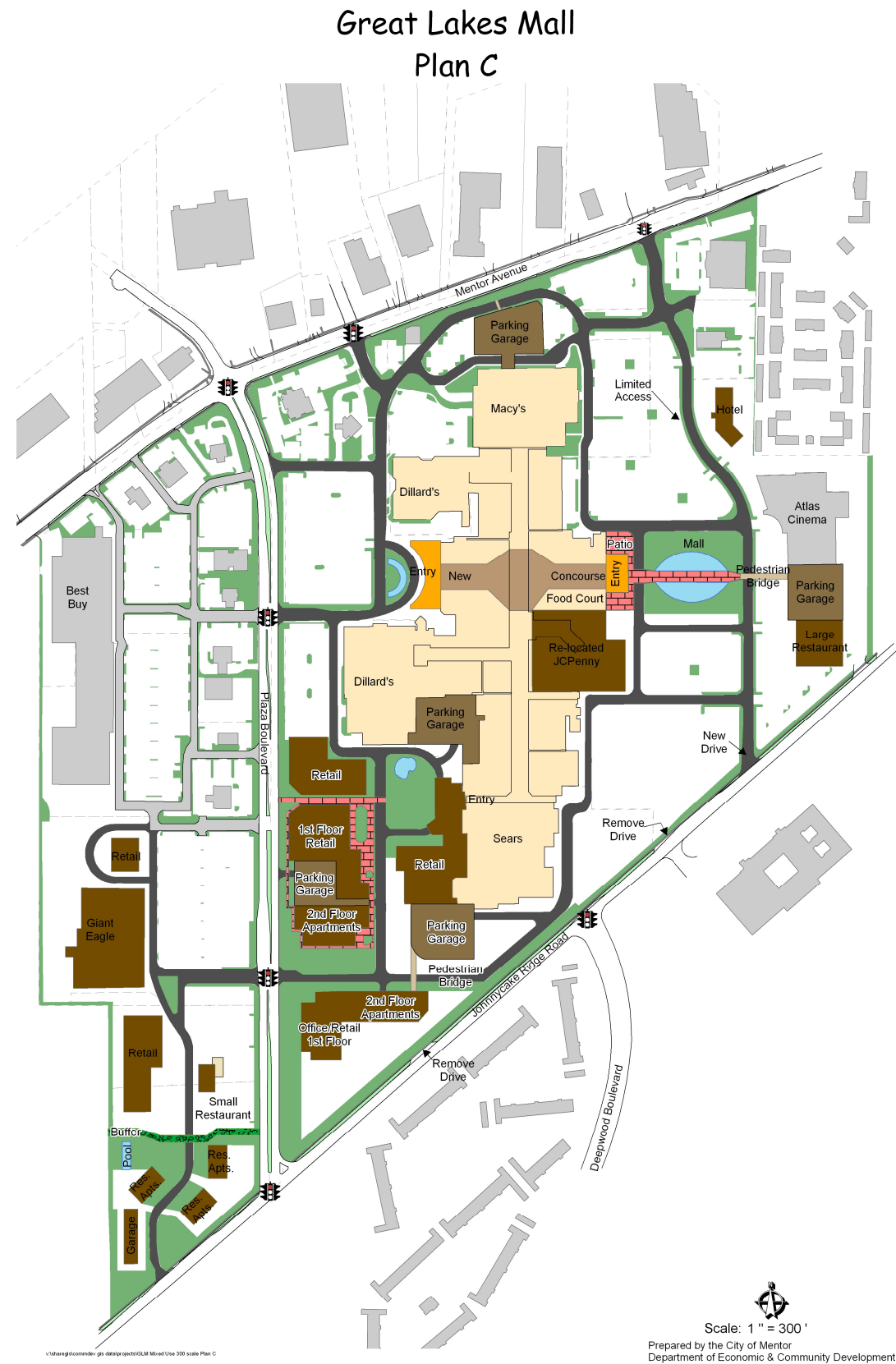
Map 4.20: Great Lakes Mall conceptual land use



Map 4.21: Great Lakes Mall conceptual land use



Map 4.22: Great Lakes Mall conceptual land use



RVG Zoning

The Residential Village Green zoning district is intended to provide “locations for low density residential developments which contain quality neighborhood open space, through the preservation of natural areas, provision of recreation space and grouping of units.” Open space is a key variable to achieve this vision.

Currently, a development is required to preserve 15% of the development site. However, open space is often unusable; it may include areas behind houses that serve as an extension of a rear yard, areas under high tension power lines, and other areas that are wasted space. The zoning resolution should be amended to ensure that open space is accessible, and functions as such. Open space in an RVG development should have the following characteristics:

- *All open space must be accessible to all residents of the development.*
- *At least one half of the open space in a development, or 7.5% of the gross acreage, must be one contiguous block. The minimum size of a single open space block must be at 1/2-3/4 acre.*
- *At least 50% of the perimeter of an open space block must front on an internal road.*
- *Except riparian and lakefront areas, open space must not take the form of narrow strips. At least one half of the area of each individual, contiguous block of open space must have proportions of 1:1 to 1:2.*
- *Open space must not function as de facto backyards.*
- *Areas within 25 feet of a residential building footprint cannot be classified as open space as they are often unusable by most residents of the community.*
- *Retention ponds, wetlands that stay saturated through half the year or more, areas under high tension power lines, traffic islands and medians, and entrance features cannot be classified as open space. More than likely these areas will not be developed anyways.*

This plan also recommends increasing the percentage of required open space in an RVG project to 20-30%. A maximum density for the site that is greater than the R-1, R-2, R-3 and R-4 districts should be permitted, to provide an incentive for RVG development by providing the potential for an equal or greater financial return compared to a conventional subdivision on the site. The plan recommends a maximum density of 3-5 units per acre of the entire site, not including undevelopable areas (utility and pipeline rights-of-way, wetlands, ponds and streams).

Providing the potential for a density bonus should also be examined. For example, if the developer protects the minimum amount required by the code no bonus is awarded. If the developer preserves additional lands, a small density bonus may be granted to the site plan so long as the ultimate density of the land conforms to the existing land use pattern of the neighborhood.

The minimum development area for a RVG zoned parcel is five acres. Increasing the minimum contiguous gross acreage of a parcel eligible for RVG zoning from five acres to ten acres is also recommended to achieve a more desirable layout and protect significant portions of valuable greenspace.

4.7 SMART GROWTH

Smart growth is a movement whose goal is accommodating development and growth, while also considering and addressing its negative effects, to create more livable, sustainable, and humane communities.

The American Planning Association adopted the following definition of smart growth.

“Smart Growth is the planning, design, development and revitalization of communities to promote a sense of place, the preservation of natural and cultural resources, and the equitable distribution of the costs and benefits of development. Smart Growth enhances ecological integrity over the short and long term and improves quality of life by expanding the range of transportation, employment, and housing choices in the region in a fiscally responsible manner.”

Spurring the smart growth movement are demographic shifts, a strong environmental ethic, increased fiscal concerns, and more nuanced views of growth; all issues in Mentor. The result is both a new demand and a new opportunity for smart growth.

General principles to follow include:

Create a range of housing opportunities and choices. Many young adults are finding they can’t afford to buy a home in Lake County, where they were born and raised. Many senior citizens, now empty nesters or living alone, can no longer maintain or heat large homes that were originally built to accommodate a large family.

Create walkable neighborhoods. Walkable communities are seen as desirable places to live, work, and play. Walkable neighborhoods are seen as desirable, because housing, retail and entertainment uses, and places of employment are conveniently located an easy and safe walk from each other. Walkable communities also make pedestrian activity possible, thus expanding transportation options, and creating a streetscape that better serves pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and automobiles.

Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration. Growth can create great places to live, work and play, if it is channeled into a community’s own sense of how and where it wants to develop. Communities have different needs and will emphasize some smart growth principles over others. Villages and townships that are defined by their rural or estate environment can preserve their identity through well-crafted architectural design and site planning requirements. Rapidly growing communities with robust economic growth may need to improve housing choices. Older suburbs that may face disinvestment may emphasize infill development and retrofitting existing commercial areas. Newer vehicle-oriented suburbs with separated uses may be looking for the sense of place provided by mixed-use town centers.

Foster distinctive, attractive communities with a strong sense of place. Retail architecture conforming to corporate prototype design, or residential development in a standard subdivision of large lots and cul-de-sacs, dilute the identity and character of a community. Smart growth encourages communities to craft a vision and set standards for development that responds to community values of architectural beauty and distinctiveness, as well as expanded choices in housing and transportation. It seeks to create interesting, unique communities that reflect the values and cultures of the people who live there, and foster the type of physical environments that supports a more cohesive community fabric. Smart growth promotes development that uses natural and man-made boundaries and landmarks to create a sense of defined neighborhoods, towns, and regions. It encourages the construction and preservation of buildings that contribute to the unique look and feel of a community.

Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost effective. For smart growth to be successful, it must be embraced by the private sector. Only private capital markets can supply the large amounts of money needed to meet the growing demand for smart growth developments. If investors, bankers, developers, builders and others do not earn a profit, few smart growth projects will be built. Fortunately, local government can help make smart growth profitable to developers. Since the development industry is highly regulated, the value of property and the desirability of a place are largely affected by government investment in infrastructure and government regulation. Governments that make sound infrastructure and regulatory decisions will foster fair, predictable and cost effective smart growth.

Mix land uses. Zoning emerged as a response to the unregulated nature of land use in the early 20th century, and the noxious character of many businesses and industries of the time. Early zoning codes were intended to protect homeowners from uses such as slaughterhouses, tanneries and glue factories, which would be a nuisance that could devalue residential properties. Today, some contemporary zoning codes prevent the mixing of residential and commercial uses, even for a well-planned project where the threat of a nuisance is nonexistent.

Smart growth supports the integration of mixed land uses into communities as a critical component of achieving better places to live. By putting uses in closer proximity to one another, alternatives to driving, such as walking or biking, once again become viable. Mixed land uses also provides a more diverse and sizable population and commercial base for supporting viable public transit. It can enhance the vitality and perceived security of an area by increasing the number and attitude of people on the street.

Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas. Smart growth uses the term “open space” broadly to include natural areas, both in and surrounding communities that provide important community space, habitat for plants and animals, recreational opportunities, farm and nursery land, places of natural beauty and critical environmental areas. Open space preservation supports smart growth goals by protecting the character of rural and semi-rural communities, preserving critical environmental areas, improving the county’s quality of life, and guiding new growth into existing communities and areas where there will be less impact on the natural environment.

Protection and maintenance of open space provides fiscal benefits that include increasing local property value, encouraging tourism, and reducing the cost of providing new infrastructure. Open space protects animal and plant habitat, places of natural beauty, and agricultural lands by removing the development pressure and redirecting new growth to existing communities. Mentor’s participation in the Balanced Growth Program provides a tool to achieve this goal.

Provide a variety of transportation choices. Providing people with more choices in housing, shopping, communities, and transportation is a key aim of smart growth. Communities are increasingly seeking these choices – particularly a wider range of transportation options with supportive development patterns.

Take advantage of compact building design. A new house in Lake County occupies about three times as much land as a house from the 1950s. Smart growth provides a way for the county’s communities to incorporate more compact building design as an alternative to conventional, land consumptive development. Compact building design suggests that communities be designed in a way which permits more open space to be preserved, and that buildings can be constructed which make more efficient use of land and resources.

Compact building design is necessary to support wider transportation choices, and provides cost savings for localities. A minimum level of density is required to make public transit networks viable. It is less costly to provide and maintain services like water, sewer, electricity, phone service and other utilities in more compact neighborhoods than in dispersed communities.

In addition to the goals listed in section 4.8, the plan recommends the City view future development and, more importantly, redevelopment initiatives with the Balanced Growth and Smart Growth principles in mind. Of note, mixing land uses, protecting critical environmental resources (PCA's), creating a distinctive sense of place and providing opportunities for housing choice are critical to the long-term health of a community.

Furthermore, building codes and development styles should be encouraged to pursue styles that use less energy and adhere to Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) compliance measures.

4.8 LAND USE GOALS

GOAL 1

“CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE THE PREDOMINANTLY SINGLE FAMILY CHARACTER OF THE COMMUNITY WHILE PROVIDING A VARIETY OF ALTERNATIVE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL RESIDENTS.”

Policies:

- A. Require that the styles and densities of proposed housing developments be designed appropriately relative to the availability of residential services and amenities. Recognize that sites must be evaluated for density and housing type suitability on their own merits and in accordance with the other policies and general design concepts of this plan.
- B. Encourage innovative design and marketability in new housing through flexible, modern zoning and building codes. Examine residential land uses in traditionally commercial areas such as the Great Lakes Mall.
- C. Require use of buffers between various residential density developments and between adjacent nonresidential uses to visually and audibly protect our residential neighborhoods.
- E. Encourage a range of housing types and prices to enable residents to remain in the community as their housing needs change.
- F. Consider the use of overlay districts for preservation in the Old Village area. This district should have a historical structure component to protect the unique architecture that remains in the area.

GOAL 2

“PROVIDE ATTRACTIVE, USABLE OPEN SPACE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.”

Policies:

- A. Encourage the provision of public/private open space in all neighborhoods of the city which provides suitable areas for child and adult play; for light and air for support and protection of wildlife; for environmental balance; for aesthetic value; for buffering incompatible land uses.
- B. Encourage the provision of high quality open space accessible to residential areas consisting of both usable areas and areas with aesthetic value such as water surfaces, streams, marshes and steep terrain.
- C. Provide technical assistance to private homeowners and homeowner associations to insure the continued maintenance of private open spaces.
- D. Examine a larger open space requirement in the RVG district and dimensional requirements to avoid unusable open space areas.
- E. When feasible, examine the acquisition of properties that possess unique recreational and environmental features.

GOAL 3

“IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND APPEARANCE OF EXISTING COMMERCIAL AREAS.”

Policies:

- A. Encourage commercial sites to be brought into conformance with the city’s building and zoning codes at such times as changes of use or occupancy shall occur in areas such as landscaping, signage, parking and buffers.
- B. Require continued enforcement of the city’s property maintenance codes in order to ensure high quality appearance of existing commercial structures.
- C. Provide assistance (such as grants, loans, technical advice, etc.) to select commercial interests in order to improve existing development (façade improvements, signage conformance, wi-fi accommodations).
- D. Encourage compatibility among commercial uses through design review, amendment, and approval of sites plans and architectural treatment of new and rehabilitated structures.
- E. Codify the existing Design Guidelines for Commercial and Industrial Corridors.

- F. Where site conditions warrant, encourage a hybrid site plan, with parking split between the side and rear of a building, and “retail villages,” where many buildings are oriented towards an internal drive or road network that recreates the feel of a village street.
- G. Determine appropriate reductions to the parking requirements in all commercial zones. Consider parking maximums and minimums. Encourage shared parking between adjacent land owners.
- H. Continue the replacement of pole signs with landscaped pedestal mount signs that do not impact view corridors at ingress/egress points.
- I. Work with major landowners to examine outlot development on valuable property.

GOAL 4

“ENCOURAGE THE QUANTITY, TYPE, AND LOCATION OF COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE NEIGHBORHOODS AND OF THE COMMUNITY.”

Policies:

- A. Where new commercial development occurs, insure it is adjacent to existing developments in order to minimize incompatible uses, maximize aesthetic values, and encourage efficient commercial markets.
- B. Require the installation and maintenance of adequate buffers between commercial and residential uses.
- C. Commercial establishments providing shopping goods should be located where adequate transportation facilities are available to support regional traffic.
- D. Commercial developments shall be located in accordance with the locational guidelines of the comprehensive plan with the understanding that each site must be evaluated on its own merit after consideration of the development policies of this plan.

GOAL 5

“ENHANCE THE PRESENCE OF CHAIN /INDEPENDENT COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES.”

Policies:

- A. Focus commercial recruitment efforts on the Great Lakes Mall area & Newell Creek.
- B. Focus recruitment efforts in the “Old Village” and independent locations in general through joint meetings between businesses and property owners.
- C. Monitor retail space vacancies, in order to promote opportunities for interest.

GOAL 6

“PROMOTE QUALITY DEVELOPMENT IN A MANNER WHICH ENHANCES EXISTING DEVELOPMENT.”

Policies:

- A. Encourage compatible land use development adjacent to established uses. Employ “buffers” such as mounds, fencing and/or landscape where necessary to minimize negative impacts.
- B. Continue to prohibit land uses having characteristics which are dangers, create noxious fumes, odors, smoke, radiation, or other negative environmental impacts upon surround land uses.
- C. Promote visual compatibility among adjacent developments, giving attention to site layout, landscaping, and architectural elements such as façade design, scale, height and mass. These concepts are also encouraged in the City’s “Design Guidelines For Commercial and Industrial Corridors”.
- D. Maximize the conservation of natural amenities such as topography, trees and other vegetation, and vistas.
- E. Develop Gateway Features at key locations (e.g. major intersections and large parcels).

GOAL 7

“PROVIDE FOR THE ACQUISITION OF SUITABLE LAND FOR PARK AND RECREATIONAL EXPANSION.”

Policies:

- A. Encourage land donations for all large developments adjacent to existing parks on land rezoned to residential.
- B. Plans should provide for the development of recreation land and facilities based on demand.
- C. Encourage acquisitions that link existing facilities or provide public lake access.
- D. Continue to plan for alternative activities and facilities at the Mentor Lagoons Nature Preserve and Marina.

GOAL 8

“EXAMINE ALTERNATIVE PLANNING AND ZONING STRATEGIES”

Policies:

- A. Continue participation in the Chagrin River Watershed Balanced Growth Plan, in conjunction with Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc.
- B. Continue to pursue development in accordance with the OV zone to protect the historical nature of the Old Village area of the City.
- C. Encourage staff and volunteer boards to participate in regional planning activities and training seminars.
- D. Incorporate Best Management Practices in all aspects of development (most notably storm water management)
- E. Perform an annual assessment of the zoning ordinance.
- F. Ensure that land use controls do not unreasonably limit the diversity of businesses permitted in the industrial and commercial districts. Revise unnecessary or cumbersome regulations and procedures which limit the community’s ability to take advantage of changes in markets and technology.
- G. Examine a new mixed use zoning district for the Great Lakes Mall area following Smart Growth and New Urbanism design principles.